

SUMMER TASTES
NEW RECIPES FROM
THE RIVER CAFE

MAGAZINE

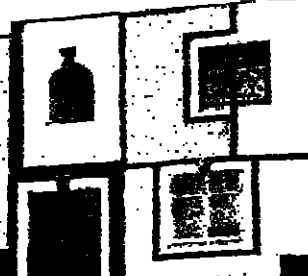


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THE INDEPENDENT

Saturday 30 May 1998 70p (IR 70p) No 3,624

Baby heart surgeons were unsafe, says GMC

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

TWO senior heart surgeons carried out operations on young children "without regard to their safety", the most important medical disciplinary inquiry of the decade has found.

After a hearing lasting over seven months, the longest in its history, the General Medical Council concluded that James Wisheart, 60, and Janardan Dhasmana, 58, continued to perform complex heart surgery on babies at Bristol Royal Infirmary long after they should have stopped following warnings from colleagues about their high death rates.

A third doctor, John Roylance, former chief executive of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, failed to respond to the warnings about the two doctors by preventing the operations from going ahead, the GMC found.

The original charges related to 53 infants operated on by the two surgeons between 1988 and 1995, of whom 29 died. All had congenital heart problems. The GMC contended that Mr Wisheart who had performed 15 of the operations, should have stopped after the 11th, when five children had died, because of his poor record and the warnings from colleagues. It said Mr Dhasmana, who performed 38 of the operations should have stopped after the first 19.

Yesterday, the council concluded that there was sufficient evidence to prove that they had continued to operate beyond the point when they should have stopped in three cases for each surgeon. Five of the six babies died - two operated on by Mr Wisheart and three by Mr Dhasmana.

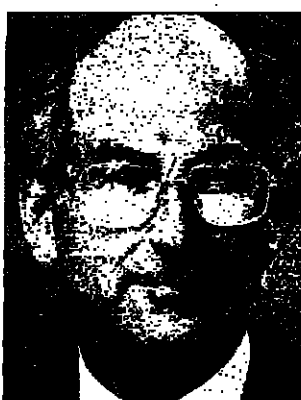
Afterwards, Malcolm Curran, spokesman for the Bristol Parents Support Group, said at least 91 children had died or been brain-damaged following surgery at the infirmary and between 50 and 55 families were considering legal action. "We want the truth about these babies to come out," he said.

The three doctors, who all say serious professional misconduct, left the hearing without commenting. Mr Wisheart and his wife were escorted from the building by police, as reporters and photographers ran after them. Mrs Rickard, whose 11-month-old daughter Samantha

died after a heart operation performed by Mr Wisheart, walked alongside his taxi banging on the window.

Mrs Rickard, whose husband committed suicide two years after their daughter's death, said: "There is still a lot more to be investigated in this case. This is just the tip of the iceberg."

The case is the first to highlight doctors' duty to monitor their performance and compare it with colleagues to protect the safety of patients. Having de-



High death rates: Surgeons James Wisheart (top) and Janardan Dhasmana

livered its "finding of fact" in the case, the seven-member professional conduct committee of the council, including five doctors and two lay people, will next consider whether the charges proved against the three doctors amount to serious professional misconduct and whether they should be struck off the medical register. Mr Wisheart and Dr Roylance, are retired. Removal from the register does not affect pension rights.

The final verdict, which is not expected before mid-June, is likely to trigger an epidemic of soul-searching by the surgical fraternity and could lead to new regulations governing per-

formance. The case has exposed the absence of clear standards against which doctors can be judged and has provoked a flurry of activity by medical organisations which are now seeking ways to introduce them. The Government has promised an inquiry when the GMC case is concluded.

Parents of children who died or were brain-damaged following surgery at the infirmary crowded into the public gallery of the GMC's headquarters to hear Sir Donald Irvine, the president, read out the committee's findings. The high emotion generated by the case was reflected by the father of Ian Stewart, who was brain-damaged but excluded from the case, who briefly interrupted the proceedings calling them a "sham" and a "charade".

Much of the argument during the case focused on the final operation on Joshua Lovelace, aged 18 months, carried out on 12 January 1995. All three doctors were found to have allowed it to go ahead when they should have known it was unsafe.

Mr Dhasmana, who performed the surgery, did so without considering referring Joshua to another hospital and without "sufficient regard" to his safety. Mr Wisheart, who was medical director of the hospital, and Dr Roylance, as chief executive, did not act on repeated warnings they received from colleagues and prevent Mr Dhasmana operating. Joshua died on the day of his operation.

The parents are demanding a public inquiry but the health department said no decision on the type of inquiry had yet been taken. After the final GMC verdict, the doctors are expected to appeal to the Privy Council and officials are concerned that a public inquiry might have to be unreasonably delayed.

The parents are due to meet Sir Cecil Clothier, former NHS ombudsman and chairman of the inquiry into the Nottingham nurse Beverley Allitt who was convicted of murdering children on her hospital ward. He is expected to try to persuade them that an internal investigation modelled on the Allitt inquiry could meet their concerns.

The GMC hearing has taken evidence from 67 witnesses and cost £2.2m.

Why did no one stop these doctors? pages 4, 5
Leading article, page 22



A boy among Muslims at worship in Islamabad yesterday when millions in Pakistan prayed for solidarity after this week's nuclear tests Photograph: AFP

Pakistan proposes Asia peace plan

By Peter Popham in New Delhi

TWENTY-FOUR hours after exploding five nuclear bombs, Pakistan yesterday proposed that all countries of the world join to ensure peace in south Asia. As the United Nations Security Council reached agreement on a statement deploring Islamabad's nuclear tests and urging India and Pakistan not

to conduct any more, Foreign Ministry secretary Shamsah Ahmad was briefing ambassadors and heads of foreign missions in terms clearly designed to counter the pariah status that both Pakistan and India are in danger of achieving.

Pakistan had crossed the nuclear threshold on Thursday, Mr Ahmad said, with a high sense of responsibility to restore

a strategic balance after India's five nuclear tests earlier this month. "Our nuclear weapons capability is solely meant for national self-defence. It will never be used for offensive purposes," he insisted.

The Pakistani proposal was for the international community to address the implications of the nuclearisation of the region, by evolving "effective, non-

discriminatory and verifiable measures to promote peace, stability and enhanced confidence in the Indian Ocean and adjacent regions".

The statements were in marked contrast to others made by the country's leaders. The Foreign Minister, Gohur Ayub Khan, declared that Pakistan was now a "nuclear weapons state," and vowed to repel any

attack from India "with a vengeance".

Britain yesterday withdrew her High Commissioner in Islamabad, Sir David Dain. A similar action was taken when India conducted nuclear tests. The United States has imposed sanctions on both India and Pakistan that jeopardise billions of dollars in loans.

Pakistan's choice, page 16

Every school to opt out of local council control

By Ben Russell

ALL schools will be given control over their finances, effectively allowing them to opt out of local authority control, the Government announced yesterday.

Stephen Byers, the Schools Standards Minister, said every head teacher would have control of a bank account and complete power over their school's day to day budget. The change will transfer an estimated £600m per year out of the control of elected councils into the hands of heads. Local authorities will face severe limits on their powers over schools and ministers will be able to cap the amount of money they spend on administering education.

The move will revolutionise the way schools are run, in effect offering all schools the

freedoms of grant-maintained status championed by the last Conservative government.

Mr Byers told the National Association of Head Teachers Conference, in Eastbourne: "This is schools' money and schools should have the benefit of that money and they should have control of how that money is used."

In the past, local authorities have come under fire for holding back from schools substantial proportions of their education budgets. Instead of having to vote to opt out of council control, all schools will be given the automatic right to manage almost every aspect of their affairs.

A consultation document proposes giving head teachers powers to run school catering, repairs, payrolls and finances as well as buying in educational ad-

vice from outside experts. Local authorities will retain powers to allocate school places, control school expansion, run special needs education and employ local advisers to ensure government targets are met.

Mr Byers said head teachers would be able to seek out the best deals on the open market, potentially releasing millions of pounds to spend in the classroom. The new arrangements will be brought in next year.

The School Standards and Framework Bill will create three new types of school - foundation, community and voluntary - to replace the current distinction between county, grant-maintained and church schools.

David Hart, NAHT general secretary, welcomed the announcement, but warned of possible redundancies if schools chose to drop council services.

In brief

Police suspended

Forty-two police officers have been suspended on full pay for the past two years while police investigate allegations of expenses fraud. Almost £5m of taxpayers' money has been spent investigating the allegations. Page 2



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Top marks for Severn Bridge

By Kate Watson-Smyth

The steel and concrete Severn Bridge (left) was yesterday ranked alongside such historic edifices as St. Paul's Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament when it was named as a Grade 1 listed building.

Built between 1961 and 1966 to improve links between England and Wales, the Severn Bridge was the first in the world

to have an aerodynamically shaped deck, and was hailed as a major engineering advance.

The deck was designed ultralight in sections to reduce the impact of the high winds that regularly batter the estuary.

Tony Banks, the Heritage Minister, said the mile-long bridge is one of ten post-war bridges to be awarded special status. "These bridges stand as evidence of the technical inno-

vation of post-war bridge building in England," he said.

James Clunie, commercial manager of Severn River Crossing which manages the bridge, said it was unique both from an aesthetic point of view and in terms of its design.

"Of course, you cannot compare the bridge with the Palace of Westminster in the same terms, but as bridges go it is a very pleasing structure," he said.

There were some people that tortured me, but there were some people who were a bandage to my wounds.

(Vedran, displaced person.)

AFTER THE FIGHTING IS OVER, Larry Hollingworth, former Chief of Operations for the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, returns to Bosnia. He visits the men, women and children who became his friends and talks to them about their past tragedies and future hopes. Tuesday mornings from 2 June, 11.02 - 11.30.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95 FM & 198 LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.



Sorry Damien, however hard you try, you've become passé

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

PICKLED sheep and half-built installations are out. The new generation of young British artists believe they have had their time. Today's young Turks prefer to use paint, photography and sculpture rather than video and dead animals.

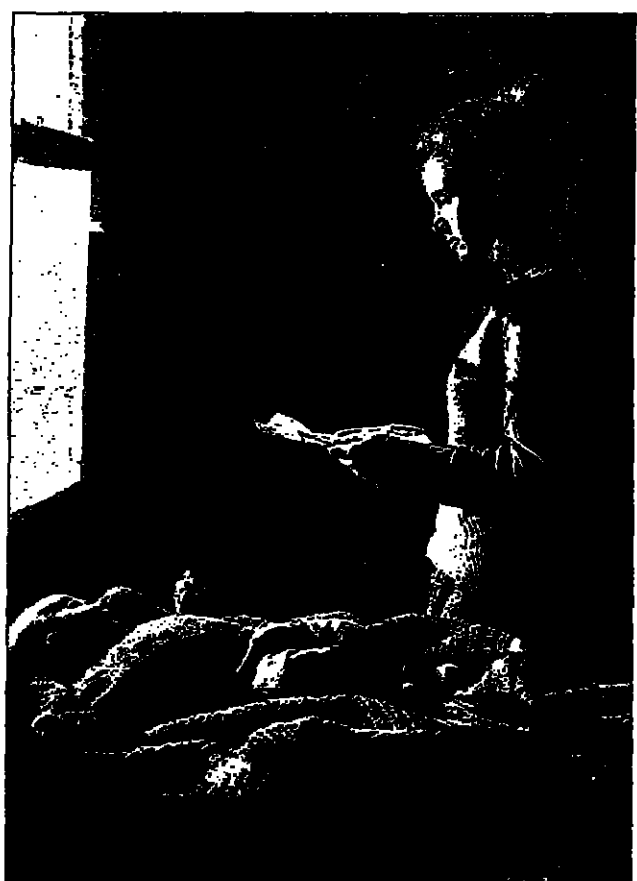
They have turned their backs (for now at least) on the artistic styles of such thirtysomething elders as Damien Hirst, Rachel Whiteread and Tracey Emin.

The new generation of young British artists are largely in their early twenties. They term themselves the "new neurotic realists" and their subject matter is more likely to be a gritty naturalistic tableau of a woman having her home taken away than Tracey Emin's tent with lovers' names embroidered on it.

Now 34 of these artists are about to be launched on to the scene by the collector and gallery owner Charles Saatchi, the key figure behind last year's "Sensation" exhibition which featured Hirst and his cohorts.

But while Sensation was drawing crowds at the Royal Academy, Mr Saatchi was scouring small alternative artist-run warehouses and studio shows to find the next generation of trendsetters. He will be exhibiting their work next January. A catalogue, *The New Neurotic Realism*, featuring their art is published by the Saatchi Gallery next Monday. The works in the book show the concerns of the new neurotic realists.

A mounted photographic print by Tom Hunter is entitled *Woman Reading Possession Order*. The woman bathed in light



in the sparse flat with her baby in a work full of pathos has a clear reference to Vermeer's painting of a pregnant lady reading a letter saying her husband is not coming home.

Nicky Hoberman's oil paintings of children hint at their sexuality. Martin Maloney's colourful figurative works on home, office and party scenes are described expansively in the catalogue as "late Picasso blends with Hockney ... he transcribes Poussin through rave culture". The catalogue adds about young painters Karl Maughan,



Victoria Chalmers and Rosie Snell: "Celebrating painterly skill, they used domesticity and a familiar English type of documentary drama. They tread a realist path which does not reflect transatlantic modishness. They claim a peculiar heritage, revisiting the skill of the deeply unfashionable Stanley Spencer. "Maughan's perfect flower borders threaten in their photographic clarity. Snell's landscape paintings trace a path of American Gothic straight to Andrew Wyeth. Chalmers paints a cool portrait of nervous

disturbance. By picking up on the underlying, kitchen sink nostalgia of the Britcool phenomena this group of painters suddenly found their documentary style a strength." Paul Smith, 29, a former soldier, creates photographs using himself to play every role, of squaddies at work and again in *Make My Night on Saturday* nights out which rapidly degenerate into violence. He said: "Hopefully, we are bringing a fresh approach to things. I have taken friends to art galleries and they find it intimidating. I am trying to look for a more grass-roots understanding of the work."

Roger Hioras, 23, who has made a sculpture of Notre Dame out of card construction with cobalt and copper chemical mounted on glass, added: "We don't despise Hirst and the Sensation crowd. They opened things up. But we don't feel such pressure to perform. We're all more secure." Jenny Blyth, curator at the Saatchi Gallery, said: "Damien and his peers are essentially conceptual artists. These new people are concerned with realism. The work produced ... will maintain an international focus on British contemporary art." The art critic Dick Price, who wrote the foreword to the catalogue, adds: "A fresh trend is emerging, swimming against the currents of the past few years. The art which is now emerging into view shakes off the ironical one-liner stance, the cynical indifference, the cult of artist as superstar ... the aggression which has been so fashionable, are no longer central to this group. Cynicism is finally passé, and the art star a bore."



Damien Hirst (top) at the launch yesterday of his work *Vindoloo*, which contrasts with the work of the "neurotic realists". Below (from left): Tom Hunter's *Woman Reading Possession Order*; Angel by Ron Mueck; and Mueck at his studio. Main photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

This week

"In search of a brave new world, they found a great new recipe for chicken."

CAJUN COUNTRY: There's more to Cajun history than Shrimp Gumbo and accordions. Pete McCarthy investigates one of the more shameful episodes in Britain's history and how modern day Academics and Cajuns are still coming to terms with it. Sunday afternoons from 31 May, 12.04 - 12.30.

"Seats available in the front row - in your front room."

FRONT ROW: Catch our comprehensive new arts programme and stay sharper than a shark in formaldehyde. Discussion, features, reviews and interviews, fronted by Mark Lawson and Francine Stock. Weekday evenings, 7.15 - 7.45.

"See the world through the eyes of two colour blind policemen."

AN INSPECTOR CALLS: A two-part series investigating racism and truancy. In this week's programme, PCs Cough and Armstrong of Watford's Racial Incident Unit deal with racism and racists face-to-face. Monday evenings from 1 June, 8.02 - 8.30.

"There were some people that tortured me, but there were some people who were a bandage to my wounds." (Vedran, displaced person.)

AFTER THE FIGHTING IS OVER: Larry Hollingworth, former Chief of Operations for the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, returns to Bosnia. He visits the men, women and children who became his friends and talks to them about their past tragedies and future hopes. Tuesday mornings from 2 June, 11.02 - 11.30.

"What is the next number in the following series? 4, 2, 3, 4, 6, 2, 3, 9, ..."

PUZZLE PANEL: Listen in as Chris Maslanka and his panel of mathematicians, chess players and other people with large foreheads set, analyse and solve puzzles. Thursday afternoons from 4 June, 1.30 - 2.00. Repeated Sunday evenings, 11.02.

"If Hugh Laurie is the Prime Minister and Stephen Fry wants to be the next Director General of the BBC, who is murdering London's dentists?"

IN THE CHAIR: Michael Williams, Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie head an all-star cast in this new political comedy from the award-winning creator of "In the Red". Friday evenings from 5 June, 6.30 - 7.00. Repeated Saturday lunchtimes, 12.30.

"You are what you eat, so get to know yourself better."

THE FOOD PROGRAMME: Derek Cooper tells you all you'll ever need to know about what you eat. A celebration of food - how it's grown, where it comes from and how to cook it. Saturday mornings, 11.02 - 11.30. Repeated on Monday afternoons, 4.02.

BBC RADIO 4
92-95 FM & 198 LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Do big ears turn suits into artists?

By Judith Palmer

IT'S 7.45am, and the relentless tide of suits washes north across London Bridge towards the City. Grey suits, navy suits, black suits: eyes fixed purposefully ahead as they stride the familiar path to work.

Breezy young women with clipboards try to button-hole them with offers of life assurance, timeshares and other property investment opportunities, but the suits slip past with seasoned defensiveness.

On the bridge, more young women wave more paper; but here, miraculously, a handful of bridge-goers stop and receive the out-stretched offering. Putting down their briefcases, they smooth down their hair, and with all due seriousness place the paperware on their heads. It's purple, pink and yellow, and not very dignified -

a pair of jaunty ears with the huge slogan, "Art is Us."

The ears have been provided by Anthony Samuelson, a 68-year-old eccentric who has been staking out the bridge every weekday morning since the end of March to pave the way for today's art happening, a comment on the Turner Prize.

In the countdown to the big event, he has spent the weeks bombarding "bridgers" with a succession of explanatory texts, culminating on Wednesday with a dress-rehearsal, in which he distributed printed headbands for home practice. "I was wearing my 'acoustimiser' at home last night," explains Mark, a stockbroker freshly delivered off the 8.05. "It was to get you used to the idea so you didn't feel a complete prat today." Has it worked? Yes. Today he is wearing his ears with pride, though somewhat disappointed at "the



Commuters as artists

typically non-committal British attitude" of many of his peers rushing bare-headed past. "You can get killed if you stop to tie your shoelace here," warns Joan from NatWest, whose colleague, Peter, has paused to take her eared-up photo.

Why is she participating?

"Anything to drop the notion that we're all drones going off to work. I cycle half the week because I can't bear being on the train treated like cattle or a bunch of refugees," she explains. "When I first got a leaflet I thought it was designed to ridicule us. I'm sensitive to being treated like a number not a person. I thought it might be donkey ears he wanted us to wear. I thought it might be just another emblem of conformity. He gradually convinced me."

Initially carrying the whiff of pretentious art hoax, Samuelson's "happening" has touched the hearts of 200 ear-wearing people: equal numbers of men and women, any age group, many in couples. "You did it!" a grey-suit slaps Samuelson warmly on the back. "Thank you! Thank you!" beams Samuelson, who as a

young barrister in the early Fifties made this self-same trip to work. Participation has far exceeded his expectation. "I'm cutting my teeth on the easy stuff," he says. "Persuading the Apprentice Boys' march in Derry may be harder."

Everyone present on the bridge between 7.45 and 9.15am, ear-wearing or not, has been declared an artist by Samuelson. To underline the fact, he has printed up Turner Prize nomination forms for "bridgers" to fill out, entitling them all to a share in the possible £20,000 winnings.

His stance is not another conceptual stab in the "Is it art?" debate, nor is it a swipe at the art world's ruling elite. "The Turner Prize is an outstanding prize for contemporary art and the people who win it are at the tops of their careers," Samuelson says. His argument

with the Turner, you see, is a teeny point in the rules - to qualify you have to be under 50.

Few of the bridgers admit any interest in art or the Turner Prize. They are, however, up for a giggle and a chance to support the man who has dedicated so much time to wooing their support. The event is entirely self-funded by Samuelson, and his stunt has hurt no one except the exasperated film crew who flew over from Los Angeles this morning to catch pictures of traditionally miserable City gents trudging to work.

In fact, there's something in it for everyone. "Are these hats?" asks a woman in her fifties. "I've refused the damn leaflets for weeks, and I was just about to walk past," she says. "But I'm going to a party in France tomorrow and you've got to wear a hat. Until now I didn't have one."

Why did no one stop these doctors

Surgeons failed to heed warnings from colleagues

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

THEY WERE dedicated and methodical heart surgeons applying their skills for the benefit of their patients. The tragedy was that their results were disastrous and they failed to heed warnings from colleagues.

That was the essence of the General Medical Council's case against James Wisheart, 60, and Janardan Dhasmana, 58. The doctors were not abusing their position, as are most who appear before the council's professional conduct committee.

They were hardworking, conscientious individuals doing their best – but their best was not good enough. Out of 53 babies operated on by the two doctors between 1988 and 1995, 29 died and four suffered brain damage. Many of the babies had Down's syndrome, which carries a high risk of heart defects.

The Bristol Heart Children Group, representing the parents, says it has identified 78 children who died and 13 who were brain damaged following operations by the two surgeons over a 10-year period from 1985. They claim 1,000 children may have been put at risk in what they call the "Bristol cardiac disaster".

Why were their results so poor? Why did they not heed the warnings from colleagues? Why, most importantly, did no one stop them when it became clear so many babies were dying? As Sandy Rundle – mother of Matthew, who died, aged 10 months, in April 1994 – said: "Someone must have been put at risk in what they call the 'Bristol cardiac disaster'."

Consultant anaesthetist Dr Stephen Bolsin, who first drew attention to the high death rate, noticed as soon as he ar-

rived at the infirmary in 1988 that major heart operations on children were lasting up to three times longer than similar operations he had attended at the Royal Brompton in London.

Dr Bolsin alerted Dr John Roylance, chief executive of the infirmary, to his concerns. Over the next six years these concerns were reiterated by other anaesthetists in the department, by the Royal College of Surgeons, by the professor of adult cardiac surgery at Bristol, Gianni Angelini, and eventually by the Department of Health itself. Yet the operations continued and babies continued to die.

Open-heart surgery requires a high level of skill, and in babies, especially, speed is of the essence. Both Mr Wisheart and Mr Dhasmana were in their fifties when they carried out the fateful operations and some say such surgery, with its enormous mental and physical demands, is a young man's game (although there are notable exceptions such as the heart transplant pioneer Sir Magdi Yacoub who is still operating at 60-plus).

One reason why they did not stop operating was because they believed they would get better. Mr Wisheart explained to the inquiry that there is a "learning curve" when a surgeon takes up a new procedure and it was common knowledge that other centres had experienced high fatality rates in the early stages.

A central issue to emerge from the case is that there were no benchmarks by which surgeons could judge whether their performance was acceptable and no guidance on training in new procedures.

Between 1990 and 1993, Mr Wisheart carried out 11 hole-in-the-heart operations on babies and five died – a mortality rate



James Wisheart

Witnesses who gave evidence to the GMC attested to Mr Wisheart's kindness, decency and honesty. He was described as dedicated by colleagues, open and sympathetic by patients. But it became clear during the hearing that he was not a man given to self-examination and self-criticism – like many of his colleagues.

Mr Wisheart, who qualified in Belfast in 1962, arrived at the Bristol Royal Infirmary as consultant cardiologist in 1975.

He became chairman of the Hospital Medical Committee, and medical director of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust in 1992.



Janardan Dhasmana

In contrast to the evidence of his senior colleague, Mr Dhasmana was so concerned about his poor performance at the complex switch operations that he went twice to Birmingham, an acknowledged centre of excellence, to try to improve his technique. When that failed he decided to stop the operations.

Mr Dhasmana qualified in Lucknow, India, in 1964. He was appointed consultant cardiologist at the Bristol Royal Infirmary in January 1986, and is the only one of the three who is still employed by the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust. He now works as an adult cardiac surgeon.



Dr John Roylance

Most NHS managers are not doctors and therefore fell outside the remit of the GMC. It was Dr Roylance's misfortune that he happened to be medically qualified and therefore found himself charged with his colleagues.

Dr Roylance, a consultant radiologist who qualified in Bristol in 1954, was an NHS manager for the last 10 years of his professional life until he retired in October 1995. He was a supporter of the Tory NHS reforms and became the first chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust in April 1991. He inherited problems and colleagues say he worked hard to pull it round.

of 45 per cent. Over the next 18 months, he carried out a further four operations on young babies and they all died, raising his mortality rate to 60 per cent. At that point he stopped carrying out those operations.

A later review of 2,500 adult heart operations, which are not

part of the GMC inquiry, revealed that here, too, Mr Wisheart's mortality rate was worse than that of his colleagues. Published in March 1997, it disclosed that four times as many of his coronary bypass patients died as did those who were operated on by the other surgeons

– 12.2 per cent compared with 2.6 per cent.

Mr Wisheart, who had voluntarily stopped operating the previous December, announced his retirement from the NHS 24 hours before the review was published.

One of the many disturbing features of the case is that despite his apparently poor skills, Mr Wisheart rose to become one of the most distinguished surgeons in Bristol. He was made medical director of the United Bristol Hospital Trust – which had taken over the running of the infirmary from 1991 – and, in 1995, he was given an A merit award, worth about £40,000 a year on top of his NHS salary for worldwide services to cardiac surgery. Merit awards are made on the recommendation of other senior consultants. What this reveals about the medical establishment will be a key question for the government inquiry that is to follow the GMC case.

Mr Dhasmana was a more able surgeon than Mr Wisheart, despite being his junior. His mortality rate for hole-in-the-heart operations was 10 per cent, better than the national average and far better than Mr Wisheart's. However, his skills were tested to their limit and beyond when, encouraged by Mr Wisheart, he began trying a new kind of heart surgery involving switching the main arteries in babies who are born with them reversed. Of the 13 new-born babies on whom he

operated, nine died and one was left with severe brain damage. Nationally, the average survival rate was nine out of ten.

In their defence, the two surgeons argued that patients did not come with single problems, but with a mix of complications that made comparisons difficult. As the senior surgeon, Mr Wisheart would have been expected to take the riskiest cases. It was impossible to draw meaningful statistical conclusions from those included in the inquiry, they said.

Dr John Roylance, chief executive of the trust, took this ar-

The surgeons' poor results were only a part of the case against them. In addition to ignoring warnings from colleagues Mr Wisheart was also found to have misled the parents of his patients by quoting national survival rates instead of his own personal survival rate which was considerably worse.

Matthew Rundle's mother was told by Mr Wisheart that there was a 90 per cent chance that his hole-in-the-heart operation would be a success. But of the 13 previous children Mr Wisheart had operated on, seven had died – giving him a suc-

cess rate of less than 50 per cent. Did these claims amount to lies? Quoting success rates in the early stages of a new procedure is tricky for surgeons. If the first patient dies, do you tell the next that the fatality rate is 100 per cent? Faced with worried parents do you worry them more by quoting cold figures or try to reassure them? Mr Wisheart claimed that the number of patients involved was too small for talk about his personal success rate to be meaningful.

Dr Roylance, charged with failing to heed the warnings about the performance of the two surgeons, claimed that he

had to rely on the clinical advice he was receiving – and Mr Wisheart was the medical director of the trust whose role included deputising for the chief executive. Although Dr Roylance happened to be a doctor, as hospital manager it was not his business to meddle in clinical matters.

One of the greatest puzzles of the case is the role of the other specialists at the Bristol Royal Infirmary. Despite the apparently poor record of the two surgeons, they continued to be sent patients for surgery. Why did the cardiologists continue to refer?

Success depends on the whole clinical team, not only on the surgeon who takes lead responsibility. It emerged during the case that, for some of the children, there was inadequate diagnostic information before the operations and, for others, poor post-operative care. Other consultants at the hospital who have not featured in the inquiry received warning letters from the GMC. A picture emerged of an institution in trouble.

Rudolf Klein, professor of social policy at Bath University, who has made a close study of the case, said: "This wasn't just about two incompetent doctors. There were problems with the whole set-up. The impression that emerges is of an enclosed culture run by people who had known and worked with each other for 20 years. I think what we are looking at is the pathology of an institution."

They were hardworking, conscientious individuals doing their best – but their best was not good enough



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Tragic case that proves need for

THE verdict of the General Medical Council in the case of the Bristol three is bound leave a sense of perplexity. Here was a case that started on a high tide of emotion involving as it did the apparently unnecessary death of small babies; deaths which as the evidence given during the trial confirmed, might have been prevented if they had been operated on by other surgeons working at a hospital with a better record. But it has ended in a complex judgement, many of the charges brought against doctors concerned have been dismissed. Tragedy has ended in confusion.

Inevitably, therefore, one reaction may be to see the case of the Bristol three as an example of the medical profession protecting its own. But that would be a mistake. The fact that the GMC bought the case in the first place was in itself a powerful signal to the

The Bristol three case shows that the GMC cannot put institutions on trial, writes Rudolf Klein, Professor of Social Policy at the University of Bath

medical profession as whole that its members are responsible not only for ensuring that they are competent to carry out the work to do but also for bringing failures of their colleagues to light.

If the verdict has been less than clear cut, it is not because of a medical conspiracy. It is because ensuring that doctors are competent is a difficult task. The importance of the Bristol case therefore lies as much in the pointers it provides for future policy verdict actually reached.

First, the case of the Bristol three is a reminder that the GMC is not designed to deal

with institutional failure, as distinct from the failure of individual doctors. Many of the problems at Bristol seem to have been institutional in character, contributing to the deaths of the babies in question. The culture of the Bristol Royal Infirmary appears to have been somewhat inbred. There was an unwillingness to address openly the disquiet about outcomes, particularly when it was expressed by newly appointed consultants. Criticism was discounted: signals were ignored.

But the GMC cannot put institutions on trial. Nor can it conduct a wide-ranging inquiry, reviewing all the available evi-

dence. It was hearing specific charges against individual doctors, and only the evidence deemed relevant to these charges was heard at the trial. One conclusion may be that in cases where there is widespread disquiet, a wide ranging public inquiry is the best response.

The evidence given during the case also raises some wider issues, ranging beyond the remit of the GMC. The doctors operating at Bristol were not specialised paediatric surgeons. They were operating on a small number of babies. They did not have a dedicated unit or team; they were working on a split site, with babies having to be transported to one hospital to another. So why were the babies not operated at one of the highly specialised hospitals with a much better record?

One answer is, of course, that it is impossible to ensure that all patients are treated by

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killing so many of our children?

'My son died, but I forgive the surgeon'

By Jeremy Laurance

SANDY RUNDLE did not think twice when James Wisheart told her that the hole-in-the-heart operation he proposed for her son, Matthew, had a 90 per cent chance of success.

"I thought you go into hospital to get better. I never thought we would come home without Matthew. I took 90 per cent to be pretty good. With hindsight, I suppose I should have asked more questions."

Amid all the recriminations, grief and anger over the Bristol heart babies, few parents are inclined to be forgiving. Mrs Rundle, 32, is an exception. Although she knows something was wrong at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, she cannot find it in herself to blame Mr Wisheart. After Matthew died, she and her husband, who works for a chemical company near their home in Tintagel, Cornwall, wrote to thank him for doing all he could.

"I am one of those people that trusts people. I can't believe a surgeon would lie. He did seem a very nice man. When Matthew went into hospital he was suffering from bed sores and they sent over to Paris to get a special bed for him. Nothing seemed to be too much trouble. A lot of parents can't stand Mr Wisheart after what happened, but I can't share that. We were really pleased with the care Matthew had. I am sure he never went into the operating theatre with anything but an intention to help."

But she expresses the disbelief shared by parents and the public that operations which were going disastrously wrong were allowed to continue for so long. "I find it hard to believe people tried to stop them and no one had the power. Somebody must have the power to stop a surgeon."

Matthew was born with Down's syndrome on 5 June 1993 and only later diagnosed with his heart problem, delivering a double shock to his

parents. They already had one son and have since had two more. They decided to devote themselves to giving Matthew the best life they could.

He was one of the last babies to be operated on by Mr Wisheart for the hole-in-the-heart condition known as atrioventricular septal defect (AVSD). He was ten months old. Seven of the previous 13 babies considered by the GMC had died making Mr Wisheart's survival rate at that point less than 50 per cent.

Matthew was taken down to theatre at 8am on 28 March 1994. His parents were told to expect him back by afternoon, but there was a delay and they did not see him again until early evening. Mr Wisheart told them the operation had gone well but there had been some difficulty getting him off the heart bypass machine.

For the next seven days, Matthew lay on a ventilator in intensive care, his condition veering wildly. One minute he would be doing well, next there was an emergency. His face began to swell but Mr Wisheart told them that it was just fluid. On the evening of the fifth of April, Nigel, Matthew's father, went to the cinema. When he returned to the hospital he was told nothing more could be done. Sandy was at home.

"My husband called and



Matthew Rundle was ten months old when he died

said Matthew was not very good and I should go up. I still didn't suspect anything was seriously wrong."

She arrived at 9 pm and at 11 pm they switched off the ventilator. Matthew died at midnight. Since his death, the Rundles have taken little part in the campaign to expose what went on at Bristol, feeling that it disturbs their son's memory.

"We could honestly say we had done everything we could for him and we had peace of mind. But when this case came up I started to relive it all. Your peace of mind goes and you wonder if you took him to the wrong hospital. I don't feel Matthew is laid to rest while all this is going on."

But she understands why other parents, not called to give evidence at the GMC as she was, want a public inquiry. "A lot of people feel they have not been heard. I can understand why they want to take it further. They want the truth about their own children to come out."

see these doctors brought to justice we can ensure that something like this never happens again.

"So many babies died and people just didn't know what was going on."

"I had another baby within a year of Melissa dying and if she had been born with the same defect she would have gone to the same hospital with the same doctors and I would have probably lost two children."

"We do need a public inquiry. It is not just about the operations, but the events leading up to the operations and after-care too. Something went seriously wrong and somebody needs to admit that."

demanding an extraordinarily high degree of skill and confidence. Failure is both more highly visible and tragic in its consequences than in the case of most medicine. If doctors over-prescribe or make poor diagnoses, the implications are likely to be less dramatic.

Ensuring competence in the bread and butter business of medicine is likely to be a more subtle and also more difficult task than ensuring competence in heroic surgery. In the last resort, there can be no substitute for doctors themselves to audit and monitor what they and their colleagues do as a matter of routine.

And the GMC trial, for all the ambiguity of the outcome, should send a powerful message to doctors about their responsibilities in this respect. On this crucial point, there is no ambiguity.

Grief-stricken parents demand public inquiry

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THE PARENTS of the children who died called for a public inquiry yesterday and said the GMC inquiry did not go far enough.

Helen Rickard, whose 11-month-old daughter Samantha died after a heart operation performed by James Wisheart, said: "I am not pleased and I think most parents today probably feel the same way as me."

As Mr Wisheart left the GMC headquarters with his wife, Mrs Rickard - whose husband committed suicide two years after their daughter's death - walked alongside his taxi shouting "bastard" and banging

on the window. "The scope of the inquiry was not wide enough," she said. "There is still a lot more to be investigated in this case. This is just the tip of the iceberg. We need a public inquiry to find out exactly what happened."

Mrs Rickard's daughter underwent a hole-in-the-heart operation on 3 February 1992. "This has shattered my life and I have not had one word of apology from Mr Wisheart or the hospital or the GMC," she said.

Tracey Clarke, whose 11-month-old daughter Melissa died in 1991 after an operation by Janardan Dhasmana, said: "Nothing can ever bring Melissa back but I feel that if we can

checks on competence

the best surgeon operating at the best places. But if so, what can be done to minimise danger? One response would be to ensure that surgeons receive adequate training before embarking on procedures new to them but already well established elsewhere. This has been done in the case of minimally invasive surgery. The Bristol case underlines the need to do so more generally.

The Bristol case also carries a further message which is that defining competence is a difficult task. In the evidence given at the trial, there was a general acceptance that the results fell below the best and that there was a need to improve performance: in fact, a specialised paediatric surgeon was eventually appointed. But when does a less than brilliant performance become unacceptable? When should a surgeon stop operating? The

various expert witnesses could not agree. All they could agree was that there are no benchmarks against which performances could be measured.

Clearly the medical profession faces a major challenge - to devise the standards against which the performance of individual practitioners can be assessed. This is clearly an urgent task for two new bodies promised by the Government - the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Commission for Health Improvement. If there was any doubt about the need for such bodies, the Bristol case has dispelled it.

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Sex, lies and Louise Woodward's lawyer

By Steve Boggan
and David Osborne

FRIENDS of Louise Woodward rushed to the au pair's defence yesterday at the end of a week in which support from the British media began to show signs of cracking.

"Louise is a lying monster" screamed the *Mirror*, quoting one of her lawyers, Elaine Whitfield-Sharp, complaining about her to a friend - later identified as the freelance journalist Annette Witheridge - during a secretly taped telephone conversation.

No matter that the "lies" related not to the death of Matthew Eappen, the baby who died from head injuries while in Louise's care, but to Ms Whitfield-Sharp's claims that she was negotiating to sell her

her either sent back to jail for life, with a minimum of 15 years before parole, or cleared of all charges and allowed to return home. The result is expected any day.

During the taped telephone conversation published in yesterday's *Mirror*, Ms Whitfield-Sharp allegedly tells her "friend" about her disintegrating relationship with Louise, who lived at her home for some time before moving out acrimoniously.

"I don't want any more trouble with Louise Woodward than I have already got," she says. "You know she is a fucking pain in the ass. I have to tell you that when this is over, I want to quit."

Describing Louise as "a duplicitous monster" and her family as "very low class", Ms Whitfield-Sharp claims that she and her mother, Sue, lied about meeting a lawyer colleague when, in fact, they were holding negotiations with a *Daily Mail* representative who was offering £40,000 for their story.

"I am flabbergasted," she said. "I have just found out about this *Daily Mail* thing. The agreement was - and the representation has always been - that the Woodwards would never make any money on this at all."

The *Daily Mail* said yesterday that it would not be paying money to Louise in line with the Press Complaints Commission rule that criminals should not benefit by talking about their crime. Silvergate and Good, her Boston lawyers, said no book deal had been done, but that did not prevent Ms Whitfield-Sharp from raising the spectre of wrongdoing during the taped conversation.

"I find it a little strange when some people have already contributed money in Britain that they are taking £40,000," she said. And, expressing worries about Louise's defence fund, she said: "I worked for six months for free."

This, at least, gave Louise's supporters something to hit back at. The Rev Ken Davey, the vicar of Ince and Elton in Cheshire and one of the fund's trustees, said: "Everything is fully accounted for as far as the trustees are concerned. Any allegations that there is no accountability would be downright lies." He said legal fees had been running at about £50,000 a month and that world-wide donations of £250,000 were now down to the last £50,000. "I have got a bill from [Ms Whitfield-Sharp] here," he added in response to the lawyer's claim to be working for free.

Paul Barrow, the fund's solicitor, also said that Ms

Whitfield-Sharp's claims to have worked for nothing were "nonsense", adding: "It is an absolute load of rubbish. I can show you the invoice she submitted and the date it was paid, which was about two weeks ago. As to where all the fund money has gone, with the greatest respect to her it's none of her business. She has demonstrated her lack of confidentiality with some of her comments."

Support in Elton, where the Woodward family live, was still staunch, according to Mr Davey. "Our resolve has not been weakened. People in the village are still committed to Louise."

Susan Woodward refused to comment on the latest furor but, privately, friends said she is pleased that there is at least one piece of good news in all the gloom: Matthew's parents, Sunil and Deborah Eappen, have a new son. Baby Kevin weighed in at 7lb 8oz when he was born last Monday, the day after Matthew would have celebrated his second birthday.



Elaine Whitfield-Sharp and Louise Woodward waiting for the judgment last November. Their relationship has now turned sour. Photograph: Reuters



How the *Mirror* reported Elaine Whitfield-Sharp's conversation with a friend about Louise Woodward

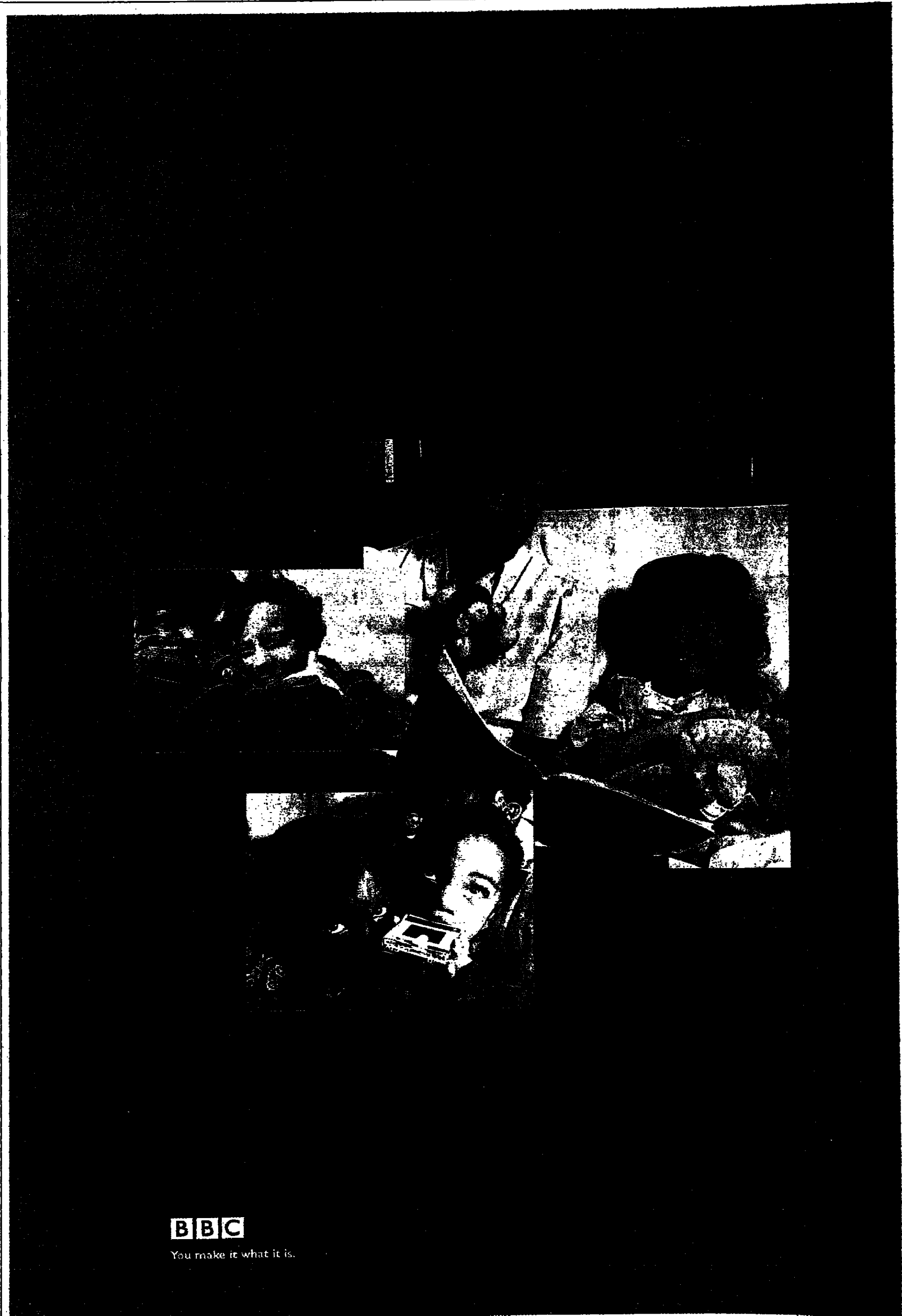
story - something she had promised not to do. Coupled with the lawyer suggesting that a book deal was in the offing, it still smacked of something going horribly wrong.

The cracks began to show on Thursday following the arrest of Ms Whitfield-Sharp, 44, on a drink-drive charge during which she allegedly told the arresting officer: "I thought she was innocent, but now I know she is guilty and I can't handle it."

The lawyer has since denied making the statement and alleged that the officer, Sgt Randy Cipoletta, said he would let her off if she agreed to have sex with him, something he has denied. But it gave the *Mirror* the opportunity to use the splash headline: "She did it."

For Louise, 20, it all added to the tension. She was convicted of the second degree murder of eight-month-old Matthew in Boston, Massachusetts. She was freed last November when Judge Hiller Zobel reduced the charge to manslaughter and sentenced her to time served.

Now she is awaiting the outcome of prosecution and defence appeals which could see



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Campaign a greener

Securicor
£50,000 for
of suicide-p

PRIVATE security has been in its suicide and violence since it was opened nine months ago has been fined £50,000 by the Prison Service for failing to be on property.

Richard Tilt, the Director General of the Prison Service, yesterday said that things were 'not right' at Parkhurst near Bristol, South Wales, which is run by the Prison Service. The penalty was imposed for 'serious' failures in the prison officials that about 10 inmates had refused to return to their cells as part of a protest in February. Extra staff had to be called in from Cardiff and Swansea jails to help.

Mr Tilt yesterday said that a further fine was being considered for Park's failure to provide enough cells for inmates. Earlier this month, the prison minister, Joyce Quin, ordered an inquiry into the running of the jail.

The prison uses a hi-tech system to hold some 750 inmates who are issued with 'swipecards' to open doors and buy goods. The refusal by inmates to return to their cells came shortly after fighting by prisoners on the exercise yard and the suicide of Dale

هكذا من الأصل

Fears multiply over growth of genetic farms



Designer campaigners against designer crops. Charlotte Green at the site of an open-air squat in Norfolk.

Photograph: Brian Harris

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

THE number of sites planted with genetically-engineered crops in the UK has more than doubled in the past two years, according to records kept by the Department of the Environment, which monitors such "releases".

There are 182 sites in the UK where transgenic crops are being grown - of which 96 have started since 1997.

The sites are spread throughout the UK, including both Wales and Scotland, though many are concentrated in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

Some of the present trials have been up and running since 1993.

The Government set up its present registration system, under which companies and research organisations must request permission before releasing any transgenic species into the environment, in 1992.

The "releases" are monitored by ACRE, the Government's Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment, which considers each application.

Earlier this year ACRE "named and shamed" a number of companies, including the multinational Monsanto, for failing to keep to the experimental procedures they had laid down.

John Beringer, the committee's chairman, said such mea-

asures were "worth many times more than fines."

In almost every case, the crops in the offending experiments were dug up, and the areas treated with paraquat.

The experiments now underway vary from 10,000 square metre plots of crops such as sugar beet, which have an extra gene making them resistant to a particular herbicide - being run by the huge multinational Monsanto, which already grows such crops commercially in the US - to wheat "containing genes to improve dough elasticity" so that it will make tastier bread.

The latter experiment is being done in a tiny 50-metre square patch by the John Innes research centre in Norwich.

The concerns of protesters are actually the same as those of ACRE, and of the scientists who are carrying out the experiments: that the test plants might somehow cross-fertilise, so that the inserted genes - say, conferring resistance to herbicides - will reach the plants such as weeds they could not otherwise reach.

That could mean make the problems of weeds worse, rather than better, because new herbicides would be needed to wipe them out.

However, earlier this week two scientists from the University of Reading's department of agricultural botany published a study in the science journal *Nature*, suggesting that the

chances of such "transgene movement" is low. They studied oilseed rape plants along the Thames, comparing its wild habitats with commercially produced ones.

They concluded that the potential for genes to cross between cultivated and wild species is low, and would only happen slowly - but that that could change "if the transgene confers a significant selective advantage".

Anyone familiar with the principles of evolution will recognise that that comment carries a veiled warning. A herbicide-resistant gene carries an obvious selective advantage to any weed that manages to acquire it.

What researchers are still trying to ascertain is how easily that could happen through cross-fertilisation. At present, the indications are that the chances are remote.

But not every experiment runs smoothly.

In 1994 the Oxford-based Institute of Virology ran into problems when it tested a genetically-engineered pesticide containing a virus which was enhanced with scorpion venom. Its intention was to kill off caterpillars eating cabbages.

But the trial descended into near-farce when the virus was found to be contaminated with the "wild" version.

Soon afterwards the head of the institute, David Bishop, left his post.

Campaigners cultivate a greener way to grow

A group of environmentalists has taken their protest right to the root of the matter: the fertile fields of Norfolk, where local farmers are growing genetically modified crops.

The 30-strong group of local and national campaigners opposed to genetic engineering set up the camp near Kirby Bedon in Norfolk last Saturday and plan to stay for about a month.

"Actions like this are the only way of bringing people together to voice concern and to say that something can be done to stop these experiments with life," said Paul Gill, one of the campaigners.

Charlotte Green, added: "We are trying to demonstrate in a symbolic manner alternatives to the massive use of pesticides and herbicides. We are showing ways of increasing soil fertility using organic methods."

Helen Morgan, a local activist, said: "Many people are concerned about the implications of these crops on our health and the environment, but as well as showing our concern, we are also discussing the alternatives."

"The site is going well. There

Enemies of hi-tech veg are camping out in Norfolk, writes
Linus Gregoriadis

is an information centre, organic gardens and lots of visitors," she added.

But Ms Green, 36, said they would not eat the vegetables they were growing in case there was a risk to their health.

She said the site is the work of a diverse group of people, some who have specialist knowledge of genetics and others who have learnt about the issue more recently.

"There are several genetics experts and others who have studied agriculture who have a lot of detailed knowledge," Ms Green said. "There are other people who are very alarmed about the lack of debate and public awareness of what is happening on open field sites."

"These are kept pretty secret. The companies have to put some kind of a notice in the local paper, but these can go

largely unnoticed. Most local people didn't know that genetically modified crops were being grown in open fields.

"Greenpeace and the Women's Environment Network have been campaigning and lobbying about this for some time. People who have been following the subject have been making it their business to get information about it."

Although the protesters have been camping out for a week now, the group is not short of essentials, Ms Green said.

"We have a cafe here cooking wonderful meals. We get water from a local person. We have got pretty much all we need."

The idea for the "Genetic Crop Squat" came from members of Norfolk Genetic Concern and Action Against Genetic Engineering who are intent on raising awareness about the burgeoning number of these sites.

"The corporations developing these crops say they welcome public debate, but it has been too little too late," said Mr Gill. "These crops are in our fields now - therefore we must act now."

Securicor is fined £50,000 for running of suicide-prone jail

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A PRIVATE jail that has been hit by suicides and violence since it was opened nine months ago has been fined £50,000 by the Prison Service for failing to be run properly.

Richard Tilt, the Director General of the Prison Service, yesterday said that things were "not right" at Parc jail near Bridgend, South Wales, which is run by Securicor. The penalty was imposed for Securicor's failure to tell prison officials that about 60 inmates had refused to return to their cells as part of a protest in February. Extra staff had to be called in from Cardiff and Swansea jails to help.

Mr Tilt yesterday said that a further fine was being considered for Parc's failure to provide enough cells for inmates. Earlier this month, the prisons minister, Joyce Quin, ordered an inquiry into the running of the jail.

The prison uses a hi-tech system to hold some 750 inmates who are issued with "swipecards" to open doors and buy goods. The refusal by inmates to return to their cells came shortly after fighting by prisoners on the exercise yard and the suicide of Del-

las Lee, 27, serving life for murder, who was found hanged to his cell - the second suicide since the £80m jail opened last September.

A spokesman for Securicor said: "There's now an action plan in place to strengthen the running of the prison."

The move against the private jail came as the Prison Service was praised for meeting all but one of its 11 key performance targets set by the Government. Despite record numbers of people being locked up there were fewer escapes and positive drug tests. The only category it failed on was the target set over assaults on staff.

But Mark Healy, national chairman of the Prison Officers Association, criticised the figures, arguing that the targets were set at a low level, virtually ensuring that they could be met. An example given was the target time that prisoners should spend out of their cells being cut from 12 hours a day to 10.

Prison chiefs are to press for improved security in courts after it was disclosed that three-quarters of the 72 inmates to escape from escort or court were by defendants jumping over the dock. Just 23 inmates escaped from prisons during 1996-97.

Father and children die in fire

FOUR young children and their 30-year-old father died in a fire at a flat in Renfrew, near Glasgow, yesterday after a light was dropped in the back bedroom, where three boys were sleeping.

Strathclyde Fire Brigade said there was a smoke alarm in the house, but they could find no evidence of a battery.

The fire started at around 6am. A ground-floor neighbour ran up to the third floor and kicked down the door before being beaten back by the thick smoke. The children's mother and grandmother managed to escape along with a fifth child who was last night in hospital in a critical condition.

Police named the victims as John Lilley and four of his children: John, nine, Anne Louise, six, and three-year-old twins, Brian and Michael. Another daughter, 10-year-old Cherelle, was transferred to Glasgow's Yorkhill Hospital where her condition was critical. The children's mother Janet McLean, 33, and grandmother Ann Lilley, 55, were treated for the effects of smoke inhalation at the city's Southern General Hospital.

A police spokesman said the cause of the fire was still being investigated, but that it was probably due to a dropped light.

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Are Britain's divers getting out of their depth?

By Clare Garner

THE Health and Safety Executive is investigating the death of a scuba diver earlier this week and may prosecute the diving school involved in the accident which has prompted renewed fears about the safety of the sport in this country.

The diver, a 34-year-old married man from south London, drowned eight miles out in the Channel, off Littlehampton, West Sussex. Four of the eight other divers in the party were rushed to hospital suffering from the bends after surfacing too fast without decompression stops. They were diving at a depth of 90 feet.

An increasing number of Britons are going on diving holidays abroad. When they return home many decide to explore the UK waters. What some fail to realise is that diving in Britain is often far more demanding than on a coral reef. Visibility is poorer, the temperatures are lower, and the



If you've been trained to dive in the Red Sea, it doesn't mean you can cope with conditions in a cold water gravel pit in England

currents are worse. Inexperienced divers are failing to take account of these factors and are going beyond their skill levels and diving without adequate support.

Graeme Gourlay, who set up the magazine *Dive International* two years ago, said: "If you're trained in the Red Sea it will be made crystal clear to you that you are trained to dive in similar cir-

cumstances, not in a cold water gravel pit in England." However, the certification card which many divers gain after a course abroad involving around 10 dives - two of which take place in a

swimming pool - allows the holder to dive in any waters. "Maybe the rules should be changed and people who have learnt to dive in more benign environments shouldn't be al-

lowed to dive in the UK on their own - or even with a buddy - until they have done more supervised dives," suggested Mr Gourlay.

Diving does not feature in

the top 10 list of risk sports. Last year there were 16 deaths from diving in Britain. However, this figure could be reduced if more divers were to join the British Sub-Aqua Club, the UK's gov-

erning body for sports diving, believes the club's vice-chairman, David Roberts.

He said: "What tends to happen is people who have diving experience in only one site walk away with a ticket that allows them to dive anywhere in the world. Our training programme requires people to experience a range of conditions before being certified."

One of the deaths at Leicestershire's Stoney Cove inland site last year involved a diver with only four open water dives in his logbook and those had been undertaken in Malta.

A spokesman for the HSE, which is investigating whether in Wednesday's accident the instructors breached the Diving At Work Regulations 1997, said: "Diving is a growing sport, along with windsurfing and paragliding. Just as with other adventure sports, when you get into difficulties and you aren't prepared things can go wrong quite rapidly and have disastrous consequences."

Photograph: Jim Edds

Motorists hit out at choking diesel fumes

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

MOTORING organisations went on the offensive yesterday by branding the Government's Don't Choke Britain campaign as "anti-car" and calling for ministers to target instead fume-belching lorries and buses.

Launching the campaign yesterday, Gavin Strang, the transport minister, urged motorists to "break the habit" and give up the car for a day.

"This government and Don't Choke Britain have the same aim: we want to see less pollution and less congestion on our roads. It's down to all of us to break the habit. Give up the car for a day - you might find it starts a new way of life," he said.

Both the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association cast doubt on the Government's campaign.

An AA official said the real problem was "older diesel vehicles such as buses and lorries which emit so many of the pollutants that cause most concern".

Motoring organisations have long been concerned that environmentalists have dominat-

ed transport thinking and aim to make a strong case for the car in the run-up to the publication of the Government's White Paper on transport next month.

Friends of the Earth produced figures yesterday claiming that since the beginning of the year air quality levels were being breached as often as once a week in some major cities.

"The true picture about pollution is more complicated," said Martin Maeso, the AA's head of research and environmental policy. "Our latest research shows that nearly 40 per cent of the pollution from particulates comes from 500,000 buses and lorries. Given these figures it seems odd to target the 23 million cars on the road."

Particulates - tiny deadly particles of dust - have been linked by ministers to the deaths of up to 24,000 people a year.

But the stance taken by the motoring organisations angered the lorry lobby. "You can't ask truckers to get out of their cabs. There is no alternative," said a spokesman for the Freight Transport Association.

"What are you going to do - ask a haulier to take 10 tonnes of baked beans on a bike?"

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هكذا من الأصل

Returning Irish emigrants discover a booming economy and a property price explosion has changed the face of the capital, write Alan Murdoch and Jack O'Sullivan

Dubliners come home to find Cool Hibernia

PAUL AND MARY Flynn abandoned London just as Cool Britannia arrived. With the birth of twins, in addition to their two other children, they could not afford a decent house with adequate schools in a good area. Promotion beckoned Mr Flynn, a hospital doctor, back to Ireland. After all, was not Dublin always the dream place to buy a fine, cheap house with plenty of land?

The Flynns have had a terrible shock. They landed in the middle of Cool Hibernia, a booming economy which makes Cool Britannia look sluggish. "We ended up having to move into a wreck which was virtually uninhabitable," said Mrs Flynn, 39, still reeling in her four-bedroom Fifties semi from the shock of managing four children with a cement mixer in the kitchen.

For three months last autumn, her husband camped in the house at night with two of the older children, because it could not be secured properly. "Some nights there was no running water or electricity," she added. For the wreck, they paid £1225,000 (£201,000). The £20,000 they made on their London home went to the Government in stamp duty.

But most people would congratulate them on securing their wreck in Killybeg, on Dublin's south side near the sea. "It's gone up £700 a week since we bought it last summer," said Mrs Flynn. "A similar one down the road just went for £1385,000."

Such price rises are a sign of a remarkable boom. Last year, gross domestic product grew by more than 10 per cent. Now, as the Republic prepares for European economic and monetary union, its key interest rate of 6.75 per cent must almost halve by the end of the year, to match German rates. With inflation still below 3 per cent and big investment from international computer firms capitalising on a well-educated population, there seems no end to the country's massive growth.

So, where 10 years ago derelict overgrown spaces or abandoned Victorian piles littered the capital, today dozens of new hotels and an estimated £500m worth of new apartment blocks have appeared, boosted by tax incentives for developers and purchasers.

In major towns traffic gridlock has gripped the centres. Regiments of gleaming new hatchbacks driven by smart young women are prominent among commuters, a contrast with the climate of permanent recession three decades ago when many women were forced to leave their jobs when they married.

"The buzz is incredible," said Mark Cassin, a 34-year-old Dubliner, who runs DMA, a directing marketing agency. Last night, he was heading out of town. "We'll be water-skiing on the Shannon down in Tipperary," he explained, pointing out just how much the Irish midlands, once beleaguered deadlands, are taking into a yuppie playground.

"Dublin's such an exciting city to live in," he said. "The number of French, Germans and Italians you see moving in is amazing. So many pretty girls. My mother comes up from Waterford, she's amazed at how smartly dressed everyone is. You can't walk down Grafton Street without



Boom-time development looms above old Dublin (left), while landmarks such as the Temple Bar (right) combine with street art and chic cafes and restaurants to make the city buzz



Photographs: Eamonn Farrell

seeing a star, a Spice girl one day, Bono another."

The landmarks remain and the old pubs - 'Toner's, Doherty and Nesbit's and O'Donoghue's in Baginbun Street - are as popular as ever. But walk across the Ha'penny Bridge and you'll find the new Pravda bar-restaurant with its neat Forties lights and plain woodwork offering Stalinist chic. Such is the popularity of some pubs that queues form several evenings a week by 9pm.

In a country that has enjoyed a long love-affair with America, the new buzz is determinedly European. The really chic gather in continental restaurants and bars such as The Unicorn, La Stampa, Cafe En Seine, Fitzer's. Guinness is still king but Belgian

'In the Eighties, I could have sold my semi in Kentish Town for a stud farm in Meath'

Roy Foster

and German bottled lagers are challenging old loyalties.

Dublin conversation has changed utterly. Once, like a scene from Channel 4's *Father Ted*, you could chat endlessly about so and so, who had gone to such and such a foreign land. "These days, they're all coming back," said Mr Cassin. "Sure, people say I'm away working for three months. But it's a long time since I heard anyone was going for good."

Instead, the chat is about property. Irish home ownership stands at 80 per cent and rising, against a European average of 56 per cent. Would-be purchasers clutching tea flasks and sleeping bags have queued for days outside site offices in south Dublin and Drogheda for affordable new suburban houses.

So what is behind this price explosion? "For good historical reasons, the Irish have had an obsessive attachment to land and acquiring it," said Roy Foster, Carroll Professor of Irish History

at Oxford University. In a way, he says, it is a repeat of events in the 19th and early 20th centuries when British governments supplied large sums of money to allow the Irish tenantry to buy out their landlords. This time, the cash comes from a combination of affluent returning emigrants and expedient lenders bending rules on income-loan ratios.

John Bruton, leader of the opposition Fine Gael party, estimates that one-third of Dublin house sales are to cash-rich speculators capitalising on escalating rent levels. Behind this lies a large disparity in wealth distribution, inflated by decades of a tolerance of tax evasion.

The boom is inevitably producing some regrets. "In the Eighties, I could have sold my semi in Kentish Town for a stud farm in Meath," ruminates Professor Foster. Among poorer, Irish emigrants to Britain, dreams of a return are being dashed. "There is a lot of anger," said Father Jerry Kivlehan of the London Irish Centre. "People who came here in the Fifties and Sixties and thought they could sell up and go home find it very difficult to secure suitable accommodation."

Professor Foster foresees political tensions. "All this ... is quite in line with other European cities, where most people expect to rent. In Ireland, we are becoming proud of being European. I'm not sure that this aspect of European life will be as agreeable as pavement cafe culture and cheap BMWs."

The Dublin government is trying to raise the supply of housing, notably by relaxing planning restrictions. Tax concessions available to investor-buyers have also been cut to dampen demand.

But Cool Hibernia still threatens to leave many behind. And it remains unclear what sort of Ireland will emerge. On Thursday, a meeting of economists, councils and property interests grappled with the issue. The PA system broke down and voices from the adjacent room drowned out the proceedings. Suddenly you could hear a born-again preacher telling the policy makers: "Let us now join hands together and pray to God ..."

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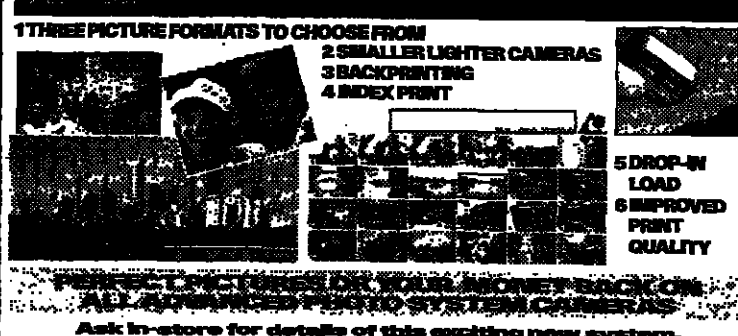


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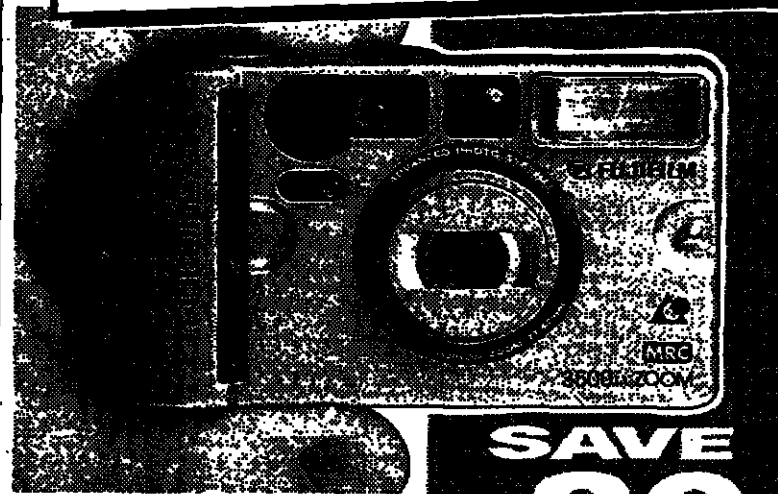
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Pakistan: 'We are a nuclear power'

By Peter Popham
in New Delhi

THE morning after its nuclear tests, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Gohur Ayub Khan was in no mood for false modesty. Pakistan was now, he declared, "a nuclear weapons state", and he vowed to repel any attack from India "with a vengeance".

"We have an active nuclear weapons programme, we are a nuclear power," he said. Government assurances that Islamabad would never use nuclear weapons for offensive purposes did not do much to soften the impression given by the Foreign Minister that Pakistan was back in character. Over the last two and a half weeks it had an unfamiliar new role thrust upon it by the world: nuclear paragon, lonely bearer of the torch of nuclear abstinence.

But with five explosions on Thursday afternoon in the Baluchistan desert, Pakistan gave its eloquent response: it wanted no such role. It was

ready to be lambasted again, as so often in the past, for militarism and fanaticism.

Was Pakistan's decision to test merely the leopard failing to change its spots, the nation ruled for so much of its short history by military dictators proving unable to march to anything but the familiar martial tune?

Clearly, in Pakistan's view the rewards on offer for a display of restraint were insultingly scanty. Australia, for example, on Wednesday offered to double its aid to Pakistan if it declined to test - from \$1.6m to \$3.2m. Measured against Pakistan's economic problems, such sums are a drop in the ocean. Pakistan's foreign reserves are less than \$1bn (India's are around \$26bn), and this year it needs \$4.5bn to meet its current account deficit.

Had the G8 been in earnest about drawing the non-proliferation line down the Indo-Pakistan border, and turning India into a solitary pariah, they should have dug deep into their



Greenpeace activists in Athens yesterday protest at Pakistan's nuclear tests
Photograph: Yannis Behrakis/Reuters

sabre-rattling of the government's extremists that persuaded Pakistan that not testing was a non-option. There is a history behind the nuclear brinkmanship between the two states, from an Indian military exercise in the border state of Punjab in 1986, to the flaring insurgency in Kashmir in 1990. As tension between the two states mounted, India massed 200,000 troops on the Pakistan border.

Pakistan also understood that with the Soviets defeated in Afghanistan, there was no chance of America coming to its aid. The only plausible threat to India was to take out New Delhi with a nuclear bomb. It was only through intense, secret negotiations involving America that the showdown was averted.

The vast imbalance between the two states in conventional forces - India with nearly 1 million troops, for example, against Pakistan with a little over half that number - meant that Pakistan feels overwhelmingly obliged to match Indian nuclear initiatives step by step.

Whether the gung-ho but inexperienced leaders of India's government foresaw the inevitability of Pakistan's tit-for-tat response is debatable. The rationale for India's tests was to haul itself up into the big power league, preferably earning a permanent seat in the Security Council in the process, while improving its security in the region. Far from being catapulted into the sort of world role it believes it deserves, India finds itself back down in the bear pit with the old enemy.

pockets. They didn't. Nor did they offer any security guarantees against an Indian attack.

Perhaps the West believed that, if Pakistan could not choose affluence it would at least avoid embracing penury. If so, it was a serious miscalculation. By testing, and thereby

provoking sanctions, Pakistan has guaranteed itself a bout of bleak and potentially destabilising austerity. But not to have tested, as Pakistanis see it, would be to be forced to live with the permanent threat of Indian aggression, conventional, nuclear, or both.

There was substance to such fears. After the second batch of Indian tests, on 13 May, India's foreign policy, normally in the remit of the cautious officials of the Ministry of External Affairs, was hijacked by belligerent Hindu nationalists. Madan Lal Khurana, a cabinet minister,

practically challenged Pakistan to come outside and fight, saying India was ready for a fourth war with Pakistan - "all they have to do is tell us the time and the place".

Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani threatened a new onslaught against insurgents in

Kashmir, with "hot pursuit" into the sector ruled by Pakistan. And far from being held in check by the prime minister, Mr Advani was rewarded with having his area of responsibility extended to include the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

But it was not merely the

Indonesia's inquiry into cronyism may hit British firms

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Jakarta

INDONESIA'S President, BJ Habibie, is considering the formation of an independent commission on corruption which will investigate business links between the family of the deposed dictator, Mr Suharto, and foreign investors, including a number of British companies.

The new body would look for evi-

dence that foreign investors benefited from nepotistic favours granted by the former president. Contracts found to have been awarded unfairly would be withdrawn and re-tendered, although both the government and opposition rule out the possibility of legal action against foreign firms.

The special commission is part of a growing reaction against the Suharto family, some of whom became immensely rich during the former

president's 32-year rule from the acquisition of lucrative business contracts and monopolies. Yesterday, in what looked like an attempt to pre-empt any investigation, Mr Suharto's son Bambang Trihatmodjo, and his son-in-law, Indra Rukmana, resigned from the board of Bimantara Citra, one of Indonesia's largest companies.

Last week, a joint venture between Thames Water and Mr Suharto's oldest son, Sigit, was suspended for

review after allegations were made by the Jakarta city authorities that the contract was awarded without a competitive tender, on the orders of the former president. The public works ministry is also set to cancel a contract awarded to the construction firm Trafalgar House and a Suharto daughter to build a toll road in west Java.

The idea of the commission on corruption was recently discussed by Mr Habibie and Amien Rais, Indonesia's

most powerful opposition leader and a potential future president of the world's fourth largest country.

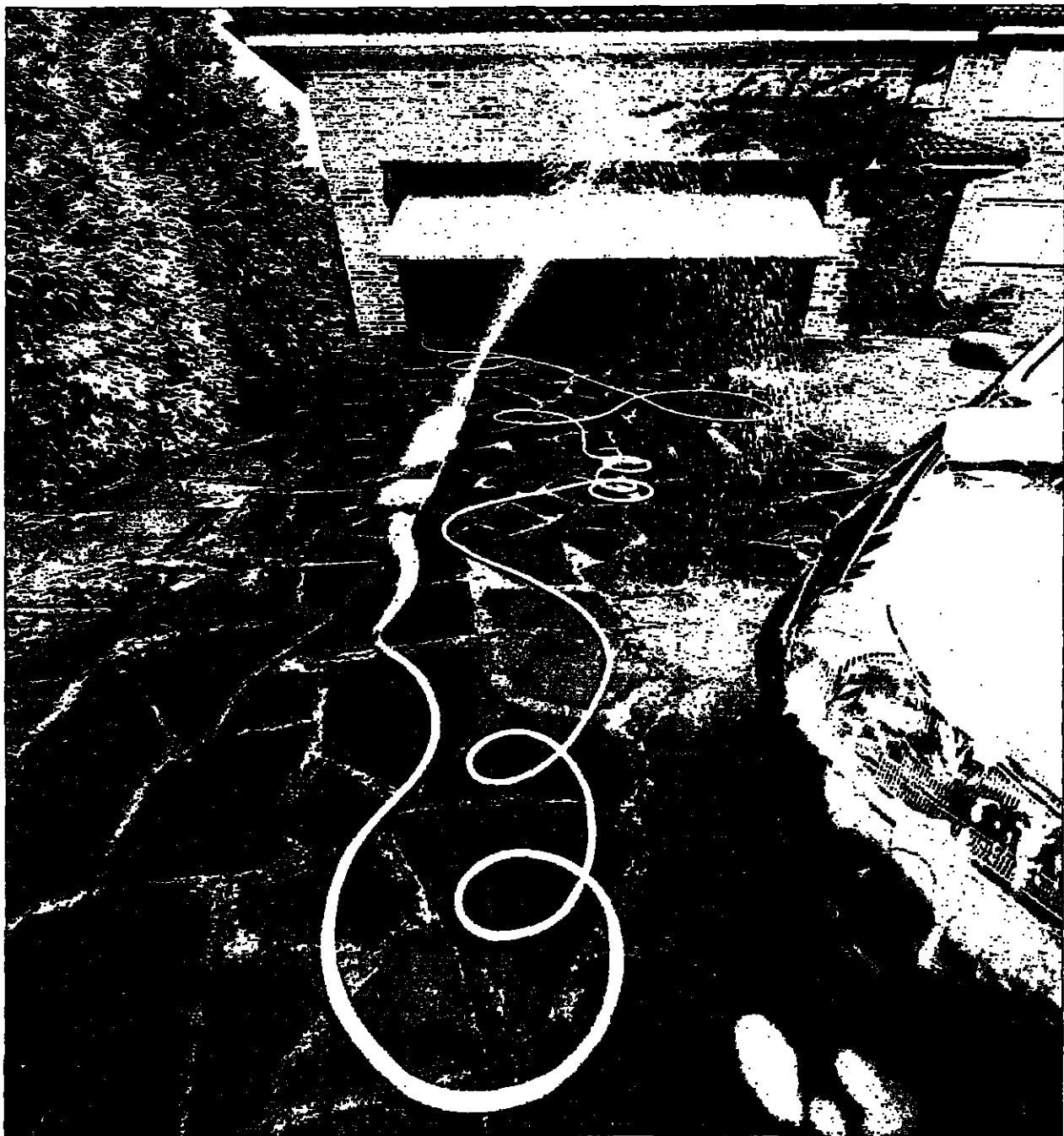
"What we will do is review whether the deals were approved without fair and open public tender," said Djoko Susilo, an official of Mr Rais's Muslim organisation, Muhammadiyah. "If they were, then we'll have to cancel them and re-tender. But we don't contemplate legal action against foreign companies who profited from

corruption with Mr Suharto."

The news will bring partial relief to British firms in Indonesia, many of whom are in business with members of the disgraced family. Last year, the United Kingdom was the biggest foreign investor in Indonesia: apart from Thames and Trafalgar House, PowerGen, Rio Tinto, BP, Rolls Royce, Taylor Woodrow, the Bank of Scotland and United Biscuits all have Suharto connections. Next week, the

minister of investment, Hamzah Haz, will announce the review of nine projects agreed by Mr Suharto during his last months in power, which will almost certainly be suspended.

Mr Rais is also pressing for an investigation into the Suharto family fortunes. Yesterday, the former president's half-brother Probosutedjo, a banker and businessman, was quoted as saying that the family had no objection to an investigation.



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Moi stirs up Kenya's tribal strife

By Mary Braid
in Nakuru

BLOODY clashes between the Pokot and Marakwet peoples in Kenya's breathtakingly beautiful Rift Valley are being officially portrayed as tribal skirmishes over cattle rustling.

But Kenyan opposition groups claim that, once again, tribal differences are being exploited, and ethnic conflicts engineered, by the government of Daniel arap Moi in a clandestine campaign to keep him in power.

Human rights groups have warned that President Moi, and his cronies in the ruling Kenya African National Union (Kanu), risk plunging Kenya into civil war in their determination to hold on to power, amid increasing opposition to the corrupt regime from outside and, increasingly, inside the ruling party.

Since the beginning of the year, violence has broken out in several districts of the Rift Valley, Mr Moi's home area and traditional support base. From January to April the Kalenjin, Mr Moi's tribe, and the Kikuyu, Kenya's largest tribe, repeatedly did battle. Guns and bows with poisoned arrows claimed more than 100 lives, mainly Kikuyu; the lives of some victims were apparently cut out to make potions to give warriors courage.

Thousands of relatively affluent Kikuyu farmers were displaced. They, and some Kalenjin victims in subsequent revenge attacks, have been forced into towns, temporary accommodation and, if they are lucky, low-paying menial jobs.

Opposition groups talk of a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" designed to flush out opposition voters and keep the Rift Valley rock solid in its support for Mr Moi. The violence, they claim, was the Kikuyu's punishment for failing to support Mr Moi, who has ruled the former British colony since 1978, in elections at the end of last year.

Ernest Murimi, of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, in Nakuru, where the clashes between the Kikuyu and Kalenjins took place, claims



A Kikuyu tribesman raising his fist in anger as he carried the coffin at a funeral service in Sipili yesterday of one of the 19 people killed in ethnic violence

Photograph: AP

that the Pokot-Marakwet clashes are also being orchestrated by government to discourage the opposition which is making gains in an area where Kanu's national splits are being replicated locally. The Pokot were faithful to Moi last December, while many Marakwets deserted him.

While the violence intimidates the opposition, it also serves the government by apparently supporting Mr Moi's warnings that multi-party democracy in Kenya is bound to lead to ethnic division.

Mr Murimi claims that Kalenjin youths who partic-

ipated in the Nakuru clashes told him they were trained for combat by an MP close to Mr Moi. "Third force" theories were boosted this year when a man killed in clashes was later discovered to be a policeman in civilian clothes. Maina Kiai, executive director of the Kenya Human Rights Commission, claims security force members have been used to stoke violence and to break up political meetings.

Opposition rallies in West Pokot to discuss the violence, have been disrupted twice this month. On 9 May, police broke up a meeting, beating up many

members of the crowd and injuring 10 MPs.

Armed supporters of Kanu attacked and broke up a second rally held last weekend, being addressed by 30 rebel Kanu and opposition MPs. When one of the 30 armed raiders was later cornered and killed by the angry crowd, uniformed police looked on and did nothing.

Among the Kanu contingent at the rally was Kipruto arap Kirwa, a outspoken junior minister in Mr Moi's government. He was dismissed from office on Wednesday. No reasons were given. Mwai Kibaki, the official parliamentary op-

position leader, who is challenging Mr Moi's win in the December elections in court, also addressed the rally.

The opposition believes the violence is Mr Moi's surreptitious response to the multiparty elections forced upon him by the international community in 1992.

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Article 19 warned that Kenya might be on the brink of civil war because of the government's failure to tackle the violence. But disquiet has now spread to Mr Moi's own party. On Thursday, a day after Mr Kirwa's dis-

missal, 42 Kanu and opposition members suspended their participation in constitutional reform in protest at the break up of opposition rallies.

Mr Kirwa said the MPs were "perturbed that agents of the government had continued to flout the law - with impunity and the government has not taken any action."

Kanu's rank and file are growing ever more restless. Last month, 82 Kanu members, including Mr Kirwa, took the extraordinary step of defying Moi to attend a conference on Kenya's collapsing economy, at which finance minister Sim-

on Nyachae admitted the government was broke and corruption still rampant.

Around Nakuru some of those displaced by fighting are being resettled on land bought by the Catholic Church.

Mr Kiai says that Moi is playing a dangerous game; for he may yet unleash forces that cannot be controlled. "The state is using non-state actors to do its dirty work and there is potential for much more violence," he says of the "uneasy peace" currently reigning between the Kalenjins and Kikuyus. "People are rearming. The language is one of war."

Yeltsin sacks his tax chief

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

BORIS YELTSIN sacked his top tax man. His cabinet announced a package of plans. And Western banks worked round the clock to make sure they could rescue Russia if it eventually goes over the precipice.

So it was that a confidence-building drive unfolded yesterday to save Russia from a rouble collapse that would destroy the limited achievements of market reform and deepen the risk of political instability in a heavily armed country.

As Mr Yeltsin launched a fight-back after Wednesday's market tumble - applauded from the sidelines by President Bill Clinton and his old friend, the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl - the International Monetary Fund finally signalled it would approve the next \$670m (£410m) tranche of a \$9.2bn loan to Moscow, even though Russia will have to wait to the end of June to get the money.

Mr Yeltsin began the day by announcing he had fired Alexander Pochinev, head of the tax service, replacing him with the former finance minister, Boris Fyodorov. The move was intended to appease the IMF, which has been demanding that Russia squeeze more tax from an economy which is short of roubles, run by a business community riddled with corruption and employs a population for whom taxes are still largely an alien concept.

The new government of Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko joined the battle. As the markets steadied the cabinet issued a statement promising to carry through Mr Yeltsin's plans to cut budget expenditures by \$7bn this year; to accelerate the privatisation of state companies; and to squeeze nearly \$1bn from 20 of the worst corporate tax debtors.

Underlying this financial squall is the fear that the rouble will collapse, causing hyperinflation and even deeper discontent in a population exhausted by nearly a decade of economic decline.

Armed thugs raise fear of 'brown army'

By Imre Karacs in Bonn

POLICE in eastern Germany have launched an investigation into reports that a small neo-Nazi group has obtained firearms. According to a German television report, the hitherto unknown Mecklenburg-Pom-

erania Squad has managed to kit itself out with Czech and Ukrainian weapons, including pistols and machineguns.

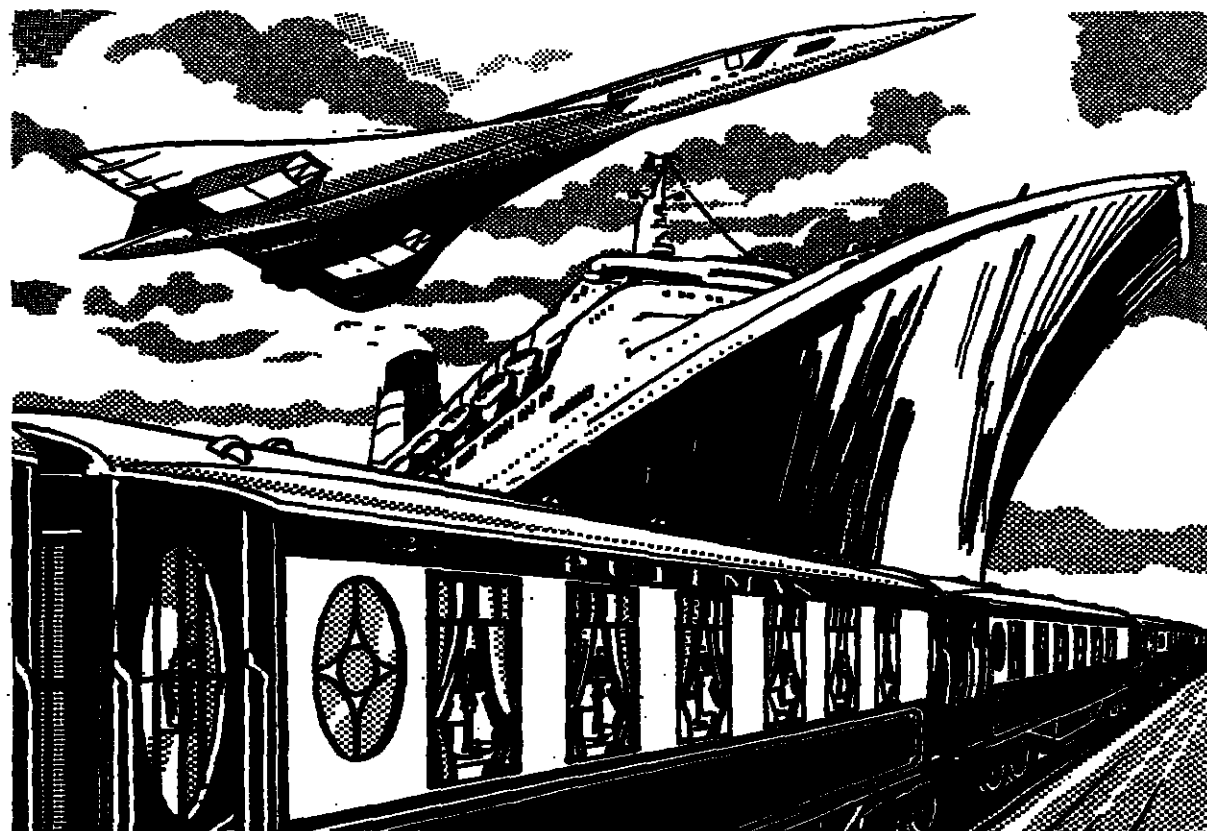
The group is believed to consist of 20 people. Interviewed on camera, its members showed off their wares, threatening to turn the guns on "the

enemies of our people," rapists and "criminal foreigners".

Until now, none of the numerous splinter groups on the neo-Nazi scene have been able to arm themselves with anything more sophisticated than baseball bats. But the authorities are increasingly concerned at the

potential of neo-Nazi terror.

The borderline between skinhead and neo-Nazi gangs is eroding, especially in the former East Germany. A "brown army" - a link-up between the thugs and the ideologues - is the ultimate nightmare of police forces in the region.



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The Open University opens minds, opens doors.

Mississippi Klansmen finally brought to book for murder 30 years ago

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

IMAGINE a state where a group of people are segregated, stripped of their political rights, brutally subdued. Imagine that the government of this state runs its own secretive intelligence agency to keep tabs on those who want to rock the boat, an agency that has hundreds of agents spying on their friends and families. Imagine that this agency connives at murder with a terrorist organisation.

This is not South Africa in the apartheid years, where the sinister "Third Force" was used to maintain order. This is Mississippi in 1966, the year that civil rights leader Vernon Dahmer was murdered. The men who are alleged to have carried out that killing are at last being brought before a court that will try them properly.

But the price, for Mississippi and for many other Americans, is a long look into a dark period of history that is still desperately painful.

Vernon Dahmer, 58, was president of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. He had fought hard for the rights of black people in Mississippi, and he knew he had many enemies. His friend Medgar Evers had been murdered in 1963, and Mr Dahmer had sat up all night, waiting to see if they would come for him. He and his wife slept in shifts, a shotgun by the bed.

But for the white supremacists, Mr Dahmer crossed the line in January 1966. He announced in Shady Grove Baptist Church that black people could pay the \$2 poll tax at his grocery store, allowing them to vote. It was, for the racists, too much. That night, they came for him, two car loads of men with guns and fire-bombs. He and his wife were woken by gunfire, and the smell of burning as Molotov cocktails were thrown into the house.

While Mr Dahmer returned fire, his family escaped. But Mr



Dahmer died hours later from smoke inhalation. "Vernon jumped up and grabbed a gun and yelled, 'Jewell, get the children out while I hold them off,'" said his wife. "They were shooting at us, and he was shooting back through the doors and windows. He sacrificed his life so that we could get out."

Eighteen men were indicted, 10 were tried, and only four were convicted. But on Thursday, 32 years later, three elderly men were led from their homes to face justice.

Foremost amongst them is the alleged mastermind, Sam

Bowers, a former Imperial Grand Wizard of the White Knights, one of the most murderous of the groups that haunted the dark nights of Mississippi. Mr Bowers had faced trial four times for Dahmer's murder, but the juries deadlocked each time. In those days, with all-white juries and a corrupt and racist legal system, justice was in short supply.

Four years ago, justice started to catch up. Byron De La Beckwith was convicted of the murder of Medgar Evers, a landmark event in the South. That convinced the Dahmer

family to renew their fight for justice. Last year, a witness came forward to say he had heard Bowers and another suspect, Deavours Nix, discussing the murder of Mr Dahmer. Another key piece of information was that Bowers had discussed rigging the jury with an FBI informant. The result was the arrest of Bowers, now 73, who had served time for the murder of three other civil rights workers, and the arrest of Charles Noble, 55, and Deavours Nix, 72.

For lawyers, the trial of Bowers - as the trial of Beckwith -

raises disturbing legal aspects. Under the Constitution, they are entitled to a speedy trial and due process; both are in doubt when the crime was so long ago, and with much evidence "lost".

But, what about Mr Dahmer and his family? "They are old now, but that doesn't matter to us. There is no statute of limitations on murder, and as far as we are concerned, that applies to age," says Mr Dahmer's son, Vernon Jr.

And what about all the others killed during those bloody years? The Southern Poverty Law Centre counts 15 unre-

solved murders from Mississippi alone, among 40 or 50 in the South.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the case, for the nation as a whole, is that it means looking anew at the machinery of state repression that was constructed in the racist South.

Much of the evidence for the case will come from the files of the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, a state body that collected intelligence on those fighting segregation and gave it to employers, the police and others; perhaps including the Ku Klux Klan. Citizens earned



Sam Bowers (top), is to face his fifth trial for the 1966 killing of civil rights leader Vernon Dahmer (above), who died after an armed raid at his home. Photographs: AP

\$100-150 for a tip. Some civil rights workers informed on each other. The files revealed that the commission screened jurors in Beckwith's trials, and more is likely to come out.

Many other nations have gone through the agony of re-living the past like this. South Africa, Argentina and Germany have all had to face the truth: that people collaborated with state organisations dedicated to repression and murder, and that justice could only come later.

Mississippi is facing the same ugly truths.

IN BRIEF

Genocide is recognised

THE French parliament, in a vote which drew condemnation from Turkey and praise from Armenia, passed a Bill yesterday recognising the 1915 killings of Armenians by Turks as genocide.

Turkey had warned that relations with France would suffer and asked the Socialist-led government to intervene to stop the Bill. France has one of the largest Armenian communities in Europe - 300,000 strong - most of whom are descendants of survivors of the 1915 killings, in which, they say, 1.5 million of their compatriots died.

— Reuters, Paris

Mugabe riot

POLICE fired tear gas and used riot sticks yesterday to disperse hundreds of students demonstrating against President Robert Mugabe's rule.

About 2,000 students blockaded Zimbabwe's Parliament for the second day, calling for Mr Mugabe and corrupt politicians to follow the example of Indonesian President Suharto and relinquish power.

— AP, Harare

\$100 baby

AN unemployed truck driver, Kenneth M. Vogelwohl, in Maryland, has been convicted of selling his infant son to the boy's former foster parents for \$100 and a used car. Vogelwohl, 38, said that he and his girlfriend, an unemployed waitress, only wanted a better life for themselves and the child. He faces up to 10 years in jail and a \$20,000 fine.

— AP, Frederick

Red-light ban

SWEDEN's parliament yesterday outlawed the purchase of sexual services. The ban was the most controversial element of a Bill widening protection against sexual abuse of women. It does not outlaw prostitutes, but the purchase of their services; the maximum penalty will be six months in prison.

— AP, Stockholm

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Viagra blamed for wrecking marriage

By Marcus Tanner

VIAGRA, the "magic bullet" for impotent men, is now being blamed for blasting a hole through an American couple's 10-year marriage.

Francis Bernardo, 70, took Viagra and found his libido so restored that he abandoned his 61-year-old partner only two days later for a younger woman.

Now Roberta Burke is suing the construction executive for \$2m (£1.25m); she is also contemplating suing Pfizer, the company that makes Viagra, for not warning the public that this drug can endanger happy marriages. The suit, filed in Long

Island, New York State, will be the first paternity suit linked to Viagra, which went on the market last month.

Mr Bernardo obtained a prescription for Viagra on 1 May to cure the impotency he suffered from 1994. Ms Burke said two days later the couple had sex - for the first time in four years. But this story had no happy ending. Two days after that he left her. Ms Burke said his parting shot was: "It's time for me to be a stud again." Ms Burke still wants her rejuvenated partner back. As for the drug? "She believes Viagra should be given out with emotional counselling," her lawyer said yesterday.

Barry Goldwater, hero of America's right, dies at 89

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

BARRY GOLDWATER, the standard-bearer of America's libertarian conservative right, died yesterday, aged 89.

He died at his home in Phoenix, Arizona. He had been ill for some time, suffering a stroke in 1996. Last year he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. A family spokesman quoted the politician's widow as saying: "He is soaring through the skies - what a pilot he has been". Goldwater, former Senator from Arizona, had also been an Air Force pilot.

President Bill Clinton, politically very distant from the right-wing Republican, said he was "truly an American original," adding: "I never knew anybody quite like him".

In recent years Goldwater lambasted the Whitewater investigation, said he had no problems with gays in the military, and argued that the state had no role in deciding on abortion.

But that was not how he made his name. Goldwater stood against Nelson Rockefeller for the Republican presidential nomination in 1964, repudiating the party's older, moderate reputation and staking out a distinctive conserva-

tive position. He lost to Lyndon B. Johnson, and was painted as a right-wing fanatic. "Extremism in defence of liberty is no vice," he told Republicans.

Goldwater had no time for many of those who followed him in the Republican party, exhorting George Bush, Newt Gingrich, Jesse Helms and Ronald Reagan. But he was always a demonic figure for the left of his party and the Democrats, who regarded him as a warmonger. The slogan of Goldwater's supporters was: "In your hearts you know he's right." His opponents countered: "In your guts, you know he's nuts."

Obituaries, page 24

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So what are today's soldiers good for? (apart from sex scandals, of course)



The presence of women in the ranks has not dispelled the image of a sexist and racist organisation

Photograph: Richard Baker/Katz/PG

SEXUAL harassment hearings are not usually the kind of thing that you need to dress up for. Certainly, the question of a hat never crossed my mind. But, then again, I had never seen the way the Army does it — much posher than your average tribunal. For starters, it is called a court martial and there are more medals on show than a Sotheby's auction. It also helps if you've got a hat — or a headress, as they are called.

Most of the witnesses at the court martial of Army chaplain Richard Landall were certainly wearing one last week at the Aldershot Court Martial Centre. Some headresses even had plumes (or hackles as they are called) which vibrated as the soldiers marched into the light-blue room and past the padre and his military escort.

They then stopped to salute the president — a brigadier — and turned into the witness box. There the men were told to take off their headresses and swear an oath on the Bible. "There is no need to replace the headress yet," they were told.

No indeed. That moment would come later and they would duly be instructed. Such is the pomp of a court martial that you can see why they are so popular with the press. The British Army may not be what it used to be — smaller, poorer, fewer wars etc — but it really does put on an embarrassingly good sex case. Some of the stories are better than Hollywood. Remember Lt-Col Keith Pople and his affair with Lt Cdr Karen Pearce, a naval officer? He gave her a vibrator known as the Pink Friend. Their sex life was fuelled by jump jets taking off above them. In the end he was acquitted, but not before every roaring detail had been reported (with sound effects). Yesterday, the chaplain would have had an inkling of how Lt-Col Pople felt, when he was partially cleared of harassment charges before the hearing was adjourned for the weekend.

Entertaining, yes, but also unsettling for civilians who wonder what exactly the military is to do in this post-Cold War age. Why, we ask, do peacekeeping and sexual harassment cases seem to be the Army's main activities? "What is it with the Army and sex?" said one observer, looking up from coverage of the "Flirting Padre" ("Unfortunately, I am a flirt and

By Ann Treneman

have been all my life," the captain testified.)

But it is not only sex. There is also drugs and violence and general bad behaviour. Every week reveals another example. A quick review of cases recently past or pending reveals a showcase of gang rape, assault, drugs, lesbianism etc. The military, it seems, is out of control. They do not see things like that at the Ministry of Defence, of course. Nor do they see it that way in the ranks. "You've got to remember, the Army is another world," said one soldier who, like almost everyone in the military, refused to speak on the record.

But the Army has always been another world: the difference is that now it doesn't really know what its world is. The identity crisis is on several levels. The first, and most basic, concerns its role. The second, its image, and the third revolves around its attempts to become more a part of our



Richard Landall: 'I am a flirt,' he confessed

world (and thus have more ethnic minorities and women, etc).

All of these are interlinked, but key to it all is the role. No one worried much about this during the Cold War. Then came the clinically "clean" Gulf war, the mess of trying to keep the peace in Bosnia and the realisation, with the likes of Sierra Leone, that many military missions are private affairs these days.

So, what exactly is the Army for now? "We need to recognise what we are actually doing — and that is peacekeeping and humanitarian aid," says Major Eric Joyce, the author of a Fabian pamphlet on the future of the military who has upset his employer by being so outspoken.

The Army, however, sees itself as a high-intensity warfare machine. Paul Rogers, a pro-

fessor of peace studies at Bradford University, says this is to be expected with a defence review due out within weeks. But he sees the modern British Army's role as something different: a highly mobile and versatile force that can make war — and peace.

Prof Rogers calls this "versatile power projection". "They need to have troops who can engage in combat and also be peacekeepers," he says. "So they are trained to kill and then be able to adjust to sorting out villages at risk."

The Army, however, will not budge from "fighting machine" talk and that locks it into a way of thinking that is pure Army. Brigadier Robert Gordon explains: "Delivering fighting capability is based on three things: the brain, the muscle and the heart. The most important is the heart, the moral component. Every military thinker from Alexander to Napoleon to the present has understood this."

The moral component, evidently, is that bit of a soldier who will advance towards enemy fire when every cell in his body says that he should be going the other way. The Brigadier sees teamwork and high moral values as creating this spirit. He calls it "cohesion". "This is why we take issues of team-building so seriously. Anything that starts to break up that cohesion or undermines it is detrimental to our capacity to deliver our fighting capability. If you have dissension in the ranks because of, say, adultery, then the cohesion is being broken and your ability to deliver your fighting capability is undermined."

The rest of the world does not see the Army like this, however. I put it to the Brigadier that most people see the army as run by the upper classes and as having a culture that is both sexist and racist.

"I think that is stereotyping, but you are right — that is what people think. We ran 34 focus groups across the country and you are right, there are these perceptions of a socially stratified army. Officers are seen as public school-boys and squadies as sort of football hooligan in uniform essentially. But this is not the real Army anymore."

Some people in the real Army, however, do not agree. Major Eric Joyce talks of "hard-core conservative" values and

sees class as the main culprit. "It all extends from the norms that dominate the army. They are misogynistic, racist etc. That is part of the culture in the upper and upper-middle classes."

The spark for recruiting more ethnic minorities and women came from the outside — mainly from European legislation — and they have a long way

to go. For instance, all three services today have a grand total of 2,380 female officers compared with 30,295 male. In the ranks there are 12,450 women as compared with 165,700 men.

The Army is now playing catch up. It has put in place such things as "gender-free training", a 24-hour helpline and a "harassment team". Some say this

is political correctness gone mad, others insist it is not enough. PR is not the Army's strong point (perhaps because it is carried out by soldiers whose ideas of spin have nothing to do with doctoring).

The Army, for instance, insists that the sexual harassment court martials send out the right signals to recruits and

soldiers. "We are aware that we are taking a risk in terms of PR in exposing some of these cases. But we are determined to root out indiscipline and what we consider unacceptable behaviour," says the brigadier.

And this takes us back to Aldershot and the evidence given by some of the soldiers with hackles on their heads. One

has said that the padre had an "earthy" sense of humour and gives this example: "The padre asked me if I had any risqué photographs to show him of my wife. I said no and he asked me if I wanted any. I laughed."

The hearing is expected to end early next week. The identity crisis is expected to continue for some time.

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Lt-Col Keith Pople and Lt-Cdr Karen Pearce: Their affair became public property

A prize monster is our story of the year



Winner Nicola Muntzer Photograph: Russell Sach

NICOLA MUNTZER, a 38-year-old mother of two, from west Sussex, is this year's £2,000 prize winner of The Independent/Scholastic competition to write a short story for six-to-nine year-olds.

She wrote her short story, *Toe-biter*, about a monster who lives under the bed of a little girl called Katie, while working as a cleaner during the week.

She said: "I've been writing for a while now. I've written two novels and a couple of short stories for children."

"I didn't get anywhere when I entered this competition last year, so I was amazed when Scholastic called. I actually thought it was a man trying to sell me double-glazing!"

"My two daughters, who are six and eight, were really helpful when I was writing the story. *Toe-biter* smells really awful and I asked them what smells they hated."

"It really made me laugh when they said burnt toast and packets of peanuts."

THE INDEPENDENT Story of the Year 6

SCHOLASTIC

"I really enjoyed the writing. I felt a real freedom creating my own stories."

"I would definitely love to write more children's literature in the future, but I will always test the water by trying them out on my own girls first."

"My family are absolutely over the moon. Because it was just a hobby, winning a competition like this has somehow made my writing more authentic."

"I would advise anybody to have a go. If I can do something like this, and I've got no

background in this area, then anyone can."

Geoffrey Henderson, 76, author of *The Little King Who Broke Things*, is one of our two runners-up, who both win £500 each.

His story is about a spoiled little prince who grows up to be a good king thanks to the court bootboy who helps him mend his ways.

Mr Henderson said: "I'm probably the oldest person to enter this competition."

"I've done a lot of different things in my life. I've been a fighter pilot, a barrister and then a writer. I've got a novel on the go at the moment which a publisher is interested in."

"This story is based on problem children I've known, but as with all my work everyone turns out to be good in the end."

The other runner up is Fiona Gibson, 33, a freelance writer for women's magazines.

She wrote *Uncle George's Magic Painting Set*, the story of twin brothers who get fed

up with receiving identical birthday presents. She said: "I've been reading all my old children's books to my 15-month-old twins and I just thought it would be great to write something of my own."

"It has been really fun to do. There is a tremendous freedom just letting your imagination run wild and not answering to any commissioning editor."

The following stories will also be included in the *Story of the Year 6* anthology to be published by Scholastic Children's Books in the autumn: *Aisha and the Fish* by Sara M Ebowe; *The Black Clogs of Castle Doom* by Rosamund Annetts; *Ella and the Egyptians* by B.J. Weir; *The Giant Sized Yuck* by Simon Cheshire; *Sisters, Not Twins* by Jenny Hughes; *Sticky Bun and the Sandwich Challenge* by Janet Frances Smith. *Snowy* by John Nevison.

Nicole Veash

"*Toe-biter, toe-biter, under my bed, if you bite me tonight, I'll kick off your head. You may try and hide, but I know you are there. So I'll pull off your ears and I'll tear out your hair.*"

"*Toe-biter, toe-biter, don't you dare, show your teeth and give me a scare...*"

"Katie Maclaren, stop talking to yourself and get into bed."

But Katie Maclaren wasn't talking to herself. She was talking to it – the unseen thing that lurked beneath her bed, the thing that had come to live in that dark, scary gap where the mattress ended and the floor began.

Nor could she suddenly break off halfway through this special warning curse or the toe-biter would know she was scared of it. And the one thing you must never do is let a toe-biter know you are scared. They feed on fear, along with tiny drops of blood from soft young human toes.

Katie shut her eyes tight, screwed her hands up into two hard fists and gabbled the rest of the curse under her breath.

"...if I feel your teeth sinking into my toes, I'll punch you hard on your very long nose. So there!"

"Katie – bed – NOW!"

There was a rush of air as Katie leapt, a twang of protesting bed springs as she landed on the mattress, followed by a sob of relief. She had escaped. Beneath the bed she thought she heard the toe-biter grinding his teeth in frustrated fury.

It was a small unpleasant sound rather like the rasping of two pennies rubbing together and it was replaced by a short, devilish chuckle. Katie's heart sank. She knew the toe-biter might have missed her tonight, but it would get her tomorrow.

Most people can find something unexpected under their beds, even if it's only a wisp of fluff, a forgotten paper handy or a stray marble, but no one that Katie knew of had anything even half as terrifying as a toe-biter. The worst that any of her friends had found was a spider and you can get rid of spiders.

Toe-biters are not so easy. They cling invisibly to the springs or the underside of the mattress like a headlouse clings to a shaft of hair. When threatened, they ooze silent between the cracks in the floorboards or they creep craftily into the doll's house and watch through the miniature windows until it is safe to come out.

So, naturally, when Katie told her parents about the toe-biter and they moved her bed to Hoover underneath, there was no sign of anything nasty.

Never let a toe-biter know you are scared.

They feed on fear, along with tiny drops of blood from soft young human toes

"There!" They said triumphantly, switching the Hoover off. "That's got rid of the nasty gnome for you."

"It's not a gnome."

"Goblin then."

"It's not a goblin either."

"What is it then?" Katie's father was getting restless. There was a big match on in five minutes and he wanted to be there, in front of the TV before it started.

"It's a toe-biter," Katie explained. "A brown one."

"Whatever it is," he said, pointing to the freshly-cleaned carpet. "It's gone now. See..."

Katie did see. It was obvious that grown-ups were pretty thick when it came to toe-biters. They did not realise that toe-biters are clever creatures and don't just lounge around waiting to be Hoovered up. The toe-biter was so crafty that even Katie herself had never seen it. But she did not need to actually clap eyes on it to know what it looked like and the toe-biter looked like nothing she had ever seen before.

Its body was small and hairy, but its head, mushrooming from a squat, wrinkled neck, was large, lumpy and hairless. It had no need of eyes, living as it did in dark, secret places so where its eyes should have been there were only two horrible sightless mounds. Its nose, on the other hand, was highly developed. Sensitive and boneless, it probed and wiggled, homing in on human flesh as an earthworm pushes blindly through soil towards the light.

And when human flesh was sniffed out the toe-biter would pounce, using long rubbery arms to seize its prey and a mouth full of razor-sharp yellow teeth to draw blood.

But the worse thing about the toe-biter, worse even than its worm-like nose or its tiny grasping claws or its brown, wizened body, was its smell.

Sometimes the smell wafting out from under Katie's bed was overpowering. It was a combination of all the most disgusting ponges imaginable

Toe-biter

By Nicola Muntzer

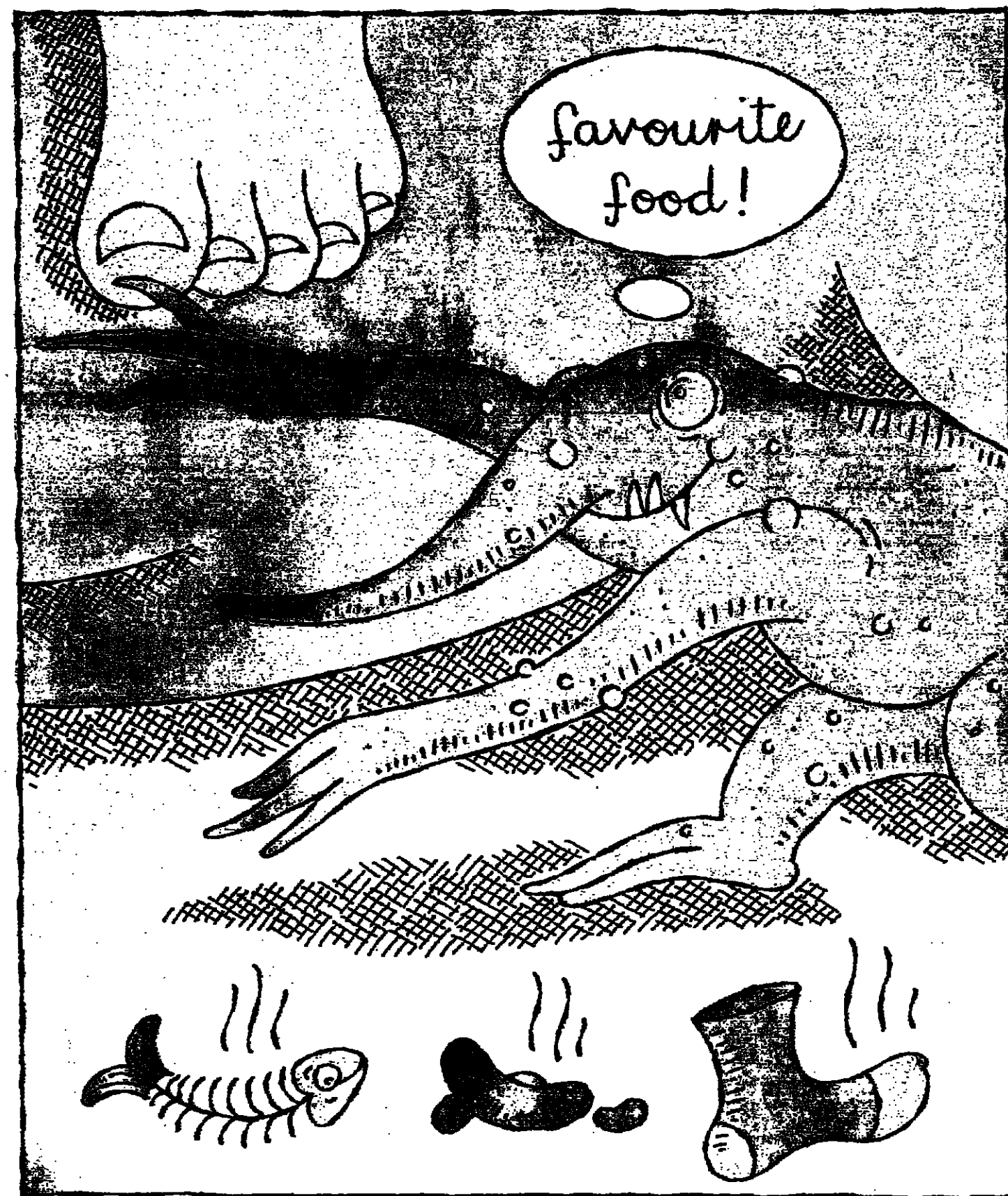


Illustration: Sally Kindberg

– a freshly-opened packet of peanuts, burnt toast, blue cheese, cat poo, steaming nappies, brussels sprouts on the boil, kippers, week-old football socks and dog breath.

But the annoying thing was, only Katie seemed able to smell it. There had been a ray of hope one morning when her mother had paused while tucking Katie's sheets in and sniffed suspiciously. "Phew, what's that stink?" She had demanded, rummaging under Katie's bed. "Toe-biter," said Katie.

"Toe-biter, my foot." And Mrs Maclaren had smiled, seized something lying under the bed and tossed it straight into the waste paper bin.

"If you must eat bananas in your room," she had continued, "at least throw the skin away afterwards."

Katie had stared at her mother incredulously. Couldn't she smell it? Couldn't she smell toe-biter? Would no-one ever believe her?

Then, one day at school, they had to write about the most frightening thing in the world. Katie, naturally, described the toe-biter and the teacher was so impressed with her story that he read it aloud to the class. And, at play time, a boy called Nathan

Spong came up to Katie. "This toe-biter thing..." he said. "I can get rid of it for you."

Now, Nathan Spong was not known for his clever ideas. In fact, people made fun of him because his hair grew straight up from his scalp in a rather surprised way and because of his name (there are several words that rhyme with Spong and none of them are nice) – but Katie was desperate.

"Can you really get rid of it?" She asked.

"I think so." He paused. "Do you want it captured alive?"

"No!"

"Dead then," Nathan nodded. "In that case, we need to work out what likes to eat toe-biters. Everything in the world has a predator, something or somebody that likes to hunt it and eat it. I can't see a toe-biter being any different. Unless... you don't think it comes from another planet or something?"

"No-o. I think it crawled up from the compost heap," Katie said.

"That's good. I'm not sure I can do aliens. Now, we need to know what a toe-biter tastes like in

order to work out what would want to eat it." Nathan took out a jotter and a pencil stub and looked expectantly at Katie.

"I'm not sure how it tastes," she said thoughtfully, "but it smells revolting – not like anything we'd want to eat anyway." Nathan made a note of this, then asked a few more questions – was it tame? Would it fit into a matchbox? Was it vicious? – and Katie answered as best she could until finally he put his pencil and jotter away.

"Leave it with me," he said mysteriously. "You ask me to tea on Wednesday and I'll see what I can do... I like sausage and chips by the way."

And, on Wednesday, after school as promised, Nathan Spong turned up on Katie's doorstep clutching a shoebox under one arm and a small, dirty, white dog under the other.

"Grubber can wait in the garden," Nathan said "while we're busy." But Grubber did not like being shut out in the garden and Katie heard him whining and scrabbling at the back door while she and Nathan climbed the stairs with the shoebox.

She was not allowed to look inside this box.

"I do experiments," he told her darkly, "top se-

cret ones. This," he patted the box, "is highly confidential."

From her bed, Katie watched as, very slowly and carefully, Nathan loosened the lid of the shoebox. He pushed the box slowly towards the gap under the bed, turned it gingerly on to its side, gave it a tap, then leapt up on to the bed next to Katie. "What happens now?" she whispered. "We give it three-and-a-half minutes exactly," Nathan whispered back. "Then we see if it's worked."

Three-and-a-half minutes seems an eternity when you are waiting for something out of the ordinary to happen.

Katie watched the second hand crawl around the face of her alarm clock – 20 seconds... 30 seconds... 35 seconds... 40... one minute...

She peered over the edge of the bed at the up-turned shoe box, watching and waiting with bated breath. She could hear her heart thumping loudly and Nathan breathing heavily with concentration beside her... one minute passed... one minute and 30 seconds... 35... 40...

From the kitchen downstairs came the muffled clatter of pots and pans as Mr Macaroon began preparing tea. Two minutes...

In the garden, Grubber had stopped whining and scrabbling and was whimpering quietly. There was no sound from either the box or the toe-biter.

Two minutes and 20 seconds... 30... 40... "Time's up," Nathan's voice made Katie jump.

"Ready?" She nodded. Together they took off their shoes and socks and lowered their bare feet over the edge of the bed until their toes were dangling temptingly in the gap where the toe-biter lurked.

"I can smell it," Katie said fearfully. A reek of rotten fish and cheesy socks seeped into the room. The gap beneath the bed remained ominously silent. A small breath of air tickled the soles of Katie's feet. She snatched them back up quickly to safety, but Nathan was more confident.

"Seems to have worked." He wiggled his toes recklessly. "I think my experiment was successful – yowch!"

As he spoke, his whole body shot up into the air and landed back on the bed in a huddle. He turned white, then pink, then white again and there, on the second toe of his left foot was the distinct impression of two sharp little teeth. He rubbed at the tiny marks with shock and disbelief.

"It bit me," he said in surprise. "It actually bit me." Katie was about to reply that biting toes was what toe-biters actually did, when she heard a

They lowered their feet over the edge of the bed until their toes were dangling temptingly in the gap where the toe-biter lurked

commotion downstairs. The kitchen door burst open and, over a background noise of sizzling sausages, came a yell "Come back here you little..." from Katie's dad. This was followed directly by a sound like a herd of stampeding antelope galloping up the stairs and a very un-antelope like panting.

"Grubber," Nathan groaned "You were supposed to stay outside." But Grubber the dog had other ideas. Yelping with excitement, he charged towards the gap under Katie's bed.

Flat on his belly, he squirmed and wriggled until almost all of his body had disappeared underneath the bed and only his tail, wagging furiously, remained visible.

Snap! Soap! His jaws met, missing their target, but on the third soap came a sickening, crunching, slurping noise and a single thin, high-pitched screech. Then nothing.

Katie looked at Nathan. Nathan looked at Katie. And Grubber, backing out from under the bed, glanced from one to the other, licking his lips and looking very pleased with himself. The dog sat for a moment, quite still, on the rug in front of them and, as he sat, a low rumble began deep in his belly. The rumble was no more, at first, than a distant growl, but as it started to move, creeping upwards, it grew louder and louder, until by the time it was vibrating in Grubber's throat, it had become thunderous. Katie and Nathan stared at him, transfixed. Grubber closed his eyes, opened his mouth and let out an enormous... BELCH!

The smell that escaped with the enormous belch was absolutely atrocious – a combination of freshly-opened packets of peanuts, burnt toast, blue cheese, cat poo, steaming nappies, brussels sprouts on the boil, kippers, week-old football socks, and breath of dog – atrocious but instantly recognisable. Toe-biter.

A species, now, thanks to a small, dirty, white dog named Grubber, extinct.

The unbelievable truth: they're not our Friends



Helen Baxendale (third from right) with the cast of 'Friends'. The Diana effect might explain why they cast her – or was it just her English accent?

America's favourite sitcom came to London – but its portrayal of the British was less than complimentary. By Gerard Gilbert

I'VE JUST watched the London episode of *Friends*. Twice, in fact, because I couldn't quite believe it the first time round.

Okay, as Phoebe always begins when she's trying to explain her mental processes to the others, for those that don't know what I'm on about – the cast of the popular American sitcom *Friends* were over in London in April filming a special hour-long episode. In it, Ross may or may not marry his British girlfriend, Emily, played by the English actress Helen Baxendale.

Filmed in a closed studio in Wembley, and on landmark tourist locations across the capital, the storyline will act as a cliffhanger for the next series. Will Ross marry Emily – or will he realise in time that he really loves Rachel? Several endings were apparently recorded.

Phoebe? Ross? Rachel? If you still don't know what I'm on about, turn the page. You will have been entirely ignorant of the media buzz that was around earlier this spring when the world's most shiny, happy sitcom played Cool Britannia a huge compliment and alighted in London.

Fergie has a bit part, as has Richard Branson. Two of Britain's most America-conscious celebs understood the momentousness of the occasion. Rachel even flies over here on Virgin. Fly the flag.

Should Cool Britannia be flattered? On the evidence of the episode, which goes out on Sky One tomorrow evening (and on

Channel 4 later in the year), the answer is no. In fact, get ready for a slap in the face.

Despite a riff from The Clash's *London's Calling* (which, let's face it, is now 18-years-old) Cool Britannia might as well not exist. Brits are portrayed as fussy, snobby, avaricious and just plain dotty. And, over half a century after Lend-Lease and Marshall Aid, we're still trying to rip off the Yanks.

Tom Conti, who plays Emily's dad, dodgers around calling people "old boy" (has anyone said that since the Fifties?). Jennifer Saunders, as Conti's wife, reprises her Edina Monsoon from *Absolutely Fabulous*. In fact June Whitfield's participation, as Saunders' housekeeper, makes one realise that *Ab Fab* is the current model of Britishness playing across the Atlantic. No wonder they don't seem to like us.

And they don't, if we are to believe the *Friends* script-writers, who know a thing or two about universal truths (the sitcom sells throughout the world). Joey is the only friend who wholeheartedly embraces the visit. He annoys the others with his enthusiasm, buys a cheesy Union Flag hat (from Richard Branson's vendor of tourist tat) and bumps into Fergie in Parliament Square (as you do). But even Joey is pinning for New York after a couple of days. He misses pizza (as if you can't get it here) and good old honest home cooking, after being offered canapés of goat's cheese, watercress and pancetta. Some of the signals,

it has to be said, are a little mixed. British cooking as over-sophisticated? Terence Conran must be tearing his hair out.

Eventually Joey is persuaded to stay by an English girl who likes his Italian-New York accent (an amusing inversion of the usual "Oh I just love your English accent" line). But then that's one thing the English are popular for – their young women. English girls are class. After all, that's why

'Ab Fab' is the current model of Britishness playing across the Atlantic. No wonder they don't like us

they cast Helen Baxendale in the first place. Maybe it's the Diana effect.

The climax of this low level anti-Britishness comes in an exchange between Tom Conti – who is trying to screw his daughter's prospective in-laws for the cost of half the wedding and as many extras as he can – and Ross and Monica's father, played by Elliot Gould. "That's enough from you,"

says Gould to Conti, "you thieving, would-be-speaking-German-if-it-wasn't-for-us little man."

There, they've said it. We'd all be speaking German now if it wasn't for them. Maybe critics of Tony Blair's Cool Britannia export drive are being too harsh. If the hip, young writers of *Friends* can still express prejudices rooted in the Second World War, maybe we do need an image update.

Watching the episode for the second time, something became apparent. It was how drab all the English seem, and how screwed up their accents are. Actors as experienced as Tom Conti and Helen Baxendale all seemed to speaking in Hollywood cockney. Is this because there isn't another British accent that American audiences understand? Regular viewers of Channel 4 sitcoms will remember the *Fraser* episode in which Fraser's English home-help, Daphne (supposedly from Manchester) was visited by her English ex-boyfriend. He was also supposedly from Manchester, but spoke with a cockney accent that would have made Dick Van Dyke blush.

But listen closer and you realise that they're not really speaking cod cockney at all. It's just the horrible, muffled sound of British actors trying to speak the lines of an American sitcom writer. Even Hugh Laurie – that epitome of a certain Oxbridge sense of humour, sounds like he's playing an improvisation game with Clive Ander-

son. Try to talk without any cadences whatsoever; pretend you're a speak-your-weight machine in need of Prozac. Laurie, as fellow airline passenger, gets to share a scene with Jennifer Aniston, that most expressive of comedy actresses. The contrast is painful. Oh well, the studio audience seem to find him funny enough.

The fact is that English and American sitcoms are like Rangers and Celtic supporters who find themselves in the same pub – they don't mix and shouldn't be encouraged to. Remember that embarrassing Roseanne episode when Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley guest starred? (admittedly Roseanne was fast disappearing up its own fundament at the time). And John Cleese may have made one of the greatest British sitcoms of all time, but that is no excuse for him to keep clogging up great American sitcoms like *Cheers* and *Third Rock from the Sun* with his guest appearances.

Friends is loathed by a certain sort of critic. The characters are too bouncy, too huggy, too American. I'm a fan; it passes the only criterion that I have for comedy: it's funny. And the characters have the sort of comic timing which most British comedy actors only possess in their dreams. The bits in the London episode when the Ross, Rachel, Chandler, Monica and Phoebe are doing their *shick* are excellent. But let's get it back to New York. Ross, for goodness sake, don't say "I do".

ARTS DIARY DAVID LISTER

I had a surreal evening on Thursday when I was among 30 or so invitees to the Roundhouse in north London to watch an even more surreal performance. The Roundhouse has, of course, been closed for years. The former railway shed which was the scene of legendary rock and drugs concerts in the Sixties and Seventies no longer has any seats in it.

And so we sat on Thursday night in a row of green deckchairs to watch the inspirational actor, storyteller and comedian Ken Campbell and his cast performing parts of *Macbeth* in Wol Wantok (popular in the South Pacific), a language that Campbell wants the whole world to learn for the millennium. Mastering it takes about three days, he swears, and he gave a lecture on its semantics after the show.

There is certainly a simplicity and universality to it which could be educationally useful. Lady Macbeth's line "Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here" translated economically to "Satan take-um me handbag". Though as Campbell pointed out, "handbag" in Wol Wantok has a very earthy, sexual meaning which makes performances of *The Importance of Being Earnest* nigh-on impossible.

This world premiere and perhaps birth of a new world language is also the birth of the new Roundhouse, about to re-open at long last. The estimable Paul Blackman, once of the Battersea Arts Centre and recently producing TV in New York, has returned to London to be the Roundhouse director, and tells me it will once again host rock concerts, theatre and also film and TV studios and workshops. I would say in Wol Wantok that Paul is the very man to do it, but Ken Campbell tells me there is no verb "to be" in the universal language. It is philosophically redundant, making Hamlet's soliloquy as hard as *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

I was rather taken by a letter to the *Sunday Times* from a reader who wondered why that paper used asterisks for swear words except in its *Culture* section, where the words were spelled out in their full glory. Do readers of arts pages have stronger stomachs or just a purer aesthetic which objects to asterisks?

The conundrum is complicated by the Broadcasting Standards commission report last Wednesday which shows that viewers of arts programmes on television would prefer asterisks if Tracey Emin is appearing. The commission upheld a complaint by a viewer that Ms Emin "had breached acceptable standards". They were (presumably) not referring to her art but her constant swearing and drunkenness in a Channel 4 debate on last year's Turner Prize.

Channel 4 says: "She was by her own admission rather drunk... Her forthright views had added spark to the discussion. She had used '****' several times but not in a manner or a frequency which would have caused widespread offence to viewers of this late-night programme."

In other words, it's the way you tell 'em. Tracey should be plied with drink and given her own programme to offer a demonstration of how and how often to use four-letter words without upsetting anyone. The resulting video could be her next conceptual work.

There was something pretty tasteful in the young Lennons sounding off this week against dad John. Julian, whose surname hasn't hindered him in getting a record deal, complained that the late Beatle didn't practise at home the peace and love he preached in public. Sean, whose surname etc. complained bizarrely that John was an adulterer. (Had he not been, Sean would never have been born). Surprise, surprise... both the junior Lennons have an album to promote, and Dad continues to make good copy, especially when being attacked by his progeny.

But isn't it an astonishing coincidence that both should be releasing albums at exactly the same time? I hesitate to suggest that their record companies encouraged family attacks as the best form of promotion. But I do marvel at the part played by coincidence in the music industry.

IT'S about time we made our minds up about guilt. Not so long ago guilt was a desperately unhealthy emotion, something we had to purge ourselves of so that we could live happy, untroubled lives. But in the past few years guilt has become something people have to embrace, because they're young of fenders and victims of leading Pacific Rim economies.

Of course you may argue, these are different kinds of guilt: the first, unhealthy sort is a generalized unease, often connected with sex and having little if any basis in actual wrongdoing; the second, the sort we want people to acknowledge, is all to do with admitting specific actions and recognising that they were bad.

I'm not so sure that you can draw a clear line between the two varieties, though. In an excellent edition of the develop-

THE WEEK IN RADIO ROBERT HANKS

ment magazine *One Planet* (World Service, Tuesday), the moral philosopher Peter Singer set out his views on the relationship between the developed and developing worlds.

At bottom, his argument is very simple: not to save a life is as bad as actively ending one – although without the same level of malevolence involved. So if you spend money unnecessarily when you could donate it to save lives in the developing world, you are not much better than a murderer.

Put this bluntly, his argument seems pretty well unanswerable. Certainly Zina Rohan, despite pressing him hard on a number of objections, failed to find any substantial holes. Most of these

he put down as making excuses; and I have to say, he's probably right. We really ought to give more, do more, think less of ourselves.

There are two objections she didn't raise which are worth mentioning. The first is that Singer's argument is all about money; but really, shouldn't he go further – shouldn't everybody in non-essential trades (including philosophers and journalists) retrain as nurses, agriculturalists, hydraulic engineers and so forth, so that they can offer their skills to the developing world? The second is the question of whether aid does any good: serious people have suggested that in the long term, aid's effects are negative.

In the end, though, the only answer to Singer is Johnson's Defence – that's Paul rather than Samuel: we are all sinners. We know it's wrong to waste money on buying booze and fishnet stockings, driving flash cars and collecting matchboxes from around the world, but we'd rather just live with the guilt. Now, which sort of guilt is that – the good or the bad?

On *Private Passions* (Radio 3, Saturday), Michael Berkeley's guest was Frances Partridge, last survivor of the Bloomsbury group. One of the pieces of music she chose was the fugue from Beethoven's C minor quartet – she felt that this piece of music asks a question about the nature of the universe. Bloomsbury? Music? The nature of the universe? Aren't all these frivolities when there are lives to be saved? Now I feel guilty I even listened.

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Weeding out the dangerous doctors

THEY DID NOT try to sleep with their patients; they were not drunks; they did not have a drugs problem. It is a pity, though, that Dr Wisheart and Dr Dhasmana did not indulge in any of these classic types of professional misconduct. Had they done so, the chances are that they would have been quickly caught, taken through some well-tried disciplinary machinery and been struck off before they could do any more damage. As it was, these two doctors were merely incompetent rather than venal, an equally dangerous condition from the point of view of their patients. And, as men who were simply not up to it, there was little or nothing anyone could do about their hideously bungled attempts to ascend the "learning curve" of paediatric heart surgery.

There should be no doubt that Wisheart and Dhasmana were attempting to work at a level far beyond their competence. Out of 53 babies operated on between 1988 and 1995, 29 died and four suffered serious brain damage. What makes this case so important is that it places a vital piece of common sense right at the centre of our understanding of the medical profession – that the competence of doctors to carry out their jobs varies just as much as it does in every other occupation. It is a commonplace that there are good and bad teachers, taxi drivers and plumbers; it is, rightly, no longer taboo to say so about doctors (whose mistakes can cost us a little more dearly than most).

So, if some doctors are so bad that they should not really be in practice, what can be done to ease them out? The answer, according to bodies like the Royal College of Surgeons is to introduce something called a General Performance Review Procedure. The idea is that the mortality and recovery rates of the patients under a given professional's care will be monitored. It is, of course, a concept that is capable of macabre distortion. A doctor could have a high mortality rate simply because he has been treating patients, say, in a very poor area with traditionally high incidence of heart disease. Such performance indicators, like those that have been introduced in education, must be treated with caution. But we should glance again at the Bristol case to realise their potential usefulness – the mortality rate of Mr Wisheart's adult patients was running at four times that of other surgeons.

The medical colleges have demonstrated, by their introduction of greater professional scrutiny, a willingness to address public concerns about the regulation of the various medical disciplines. They must make their new procedures stick and develop a habit of openness with patients if they do want to restore confidence and avoid an even more intrusive and less understanding intervention on behalf of those they treat.

Shoppers deserve a fairer deal

THE NAMES of Karel van Miert and John Bridgeman ought to be on the lips of every consumer heading for the shopping centre this morning. Sadly, it would be surprising if one person in a supermarket car park could identify either the European competition commissioner or the director-general of the Office of Fair Trading. It was Mr Bridgeman who told Le Coq Sportif last month to stop fixing the price of its £40 football shirts. "I will not tolerate attempts at price-fixing," he thundered. Quite right. It is illegal for manufacturers to hassle shops which sell their goods at discount prices, or to refuse to supply them. But it happens all the time. Businesses simply refuse to see anti-competitive behaviour as malign. "We broke the law, but commercially I don't see anything wrong with charging a



proper price for a highly sought-after brand name," said a spokesman for Le Coq. And the law is notoriously difficult to enforce. Recently, Tesco has seemed rather better at the job than Mr Bridgeman. It sells the Umbro England football shirt, recommended retail price £45, for £33, at which Umbro has taken Umbrage. As we reported yesterday, Tesco is also being sued by Tommy Hilfiger, an American fashion label, which alleges the goods being sold cheaply in the supermarket are fakes. The case should be thrown out and Hilfiger forced to supply its goods direct.

It is possible to argue that anyone prepared to pay silly prices for fashionable labels or football insignia deserves to be fleeced for all they are worth. Possible, but dangerous. Because price-fixing is not limited to high fashion. Tesco sells a range of electrical goods for less than the recommended retail price. CDs, hi-fis and computers are all overpriced. Above all, British cars and motorbikes are notoriously more expensive than on the Continent – still, a quarter of a century after we joined the Common Market.

Mr Bridgeman and Mr van Miert have failed the public: they should be much tougher. Price-fixing is against the law and the law should be enforced rigorously. To the extent that our "trustbusters" need new powers, some are on the way – fines of up to a tenth of a company's turnover. But the politicians should also give them the power to act quickly – speed is of the essence, so they can swoop on any malpractice and order immediate action. Until the consumer knows who the trustbusters are and can summon them, like superheroes, to the scene of any infraction, our protection against monopolists remains scant.

Shock to the new

THE LIFE cycle of the enfant terrible is getting shorter. Time was when the shock of the new could see you right for at least a decade of media attention. Patrons and the media both got a thrill from being outraged and their gratitude was as tangible and reliable as it was perverse. For the likes of Damien Hirst and his visceral animals, coverage, and a living, were not a problem.

But times change and the enfant now find themselves enmeshed with no intervening period whatever. Still in their thirties, they are being ousted by the so-called New Neurotics, who are embraced by the Saatchis and rely more on traditional influences such as Vermeer and Poussin than the abattoir. We are told that cynicism is passé and the art star a bore. Given the brevity of their predecessors' reigns, the new favourites have plenty to be neurotic about.



A lush countryside during the wheat harvest at Burnham Market, Norfolk. See letters below left

Photograph: John Voos

Farmers fight back

Sir: You display complete insensitivity to the plight of farmers and their important role in a nation increasingly dominated by urban values (leading article, 28 May).

I suspect that if the writer, from a low base, had suffered a 46 per cent decrease in income, he or she would be "bleating like a spring lamb", especially if the fall had nothing whatsoever to do with performance.

Anyone who imagines that the demise of our home farming industry would lead to lower prices is living in cloud-cuckoo land, as a visit to any supermarket proves, when farm-gate prices are at their lowest for a generation.

We are ruled by Brussels, not the market. There is nothing farmers wish more than to be allowed to compete on fair terms in world markets, but that option is denied to us.

Britain is beautifully farmed, lush, green, and productive. Without farmers there would be no countryside as we wish it, and to suggest trees and housing as acceptable alternative uses means nothing less than its destruction.

Think seriously before you condemn this "interest group" to the scrap heap. To imagine that "townspeople are more solicitous" of our countryside than those who live and work there and who are the traditional keepers of our pastoral heritage is a misconception for which our descendants will not thank us.

PETER ASHLEY
Harford

Sir: There was a time when I would have been upset by your leading article, but times have changed, and I now have to agree with you.

Farming has for decades been claiming to be an "industry", farms have, for the most part, become factories; animals are at best a "crop". The farmers, led by the NFU, have sided with profiteers, even when it has involved huge animal suffering, as in the protests over live exports.

Having sown the wind of industrialism, and alienated the public by insisting on the lawfulness of sending calves to crates and sheep on gruelling journeys to barbaric slaughter (not to mention feeding chicken to cows), the farmers cannot be surprised when they reap the whirlwind of public fury.

If farmers want to be treated differently from other greedy industrialists, they will have to stop behaving like them.

DR AMANDA VANCE
West Chilmington, West Sussex

Sir: Your leading article was a bizarre mix of misguided free-market propaganda and gloating over the demise of yet another British way of life.

A free-for-all reduction in suppliers inevitably leads to controlled markets and higher prices. As small farms die, agribusiness takes over and soon yet another industry will be entirely in the hands of a tiny, all-powerful élite.

TOM PEER
London SW11

Sir: To compare agriculture to any other industry is impossible. Food is not a commodity in the same way that electricity, cars or records (as you suggest) are. Now, more than ever, we need confidence in our food; that means efficient regulation and traceability of, where possible, home-produced food.

It is true to say that farmers, faced with new technology, have polluted the environment, as have the chemical, extraction and manufacturing industries. The intensification of agriculture was in response to government and, latterly, EU policies.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

However, the countryside (which according to you, has been "sprayed, chopped down and polluted") is proving a strong magnet for the urban populace. Perhaps we haven't been too barbaric.

Agriculture is an export-led industry and a significant positive contributor to the balance of payments. So it is not the weather or some other "trivial" factor, but the strength of sterling that is the source of the current turmoil.

MICHAEL STUBBS
Department of Agricultural
Economics and Business
Management

Wye College, University of London
Wye, Kent

'Poisonous' Gulf shells

Sir: Robert Fisk reports ("The West's poisonous legacy", 28 May) that the depleted uranium (DU) based ammunition used by the UK and US forces during the 1990-91 Gulf conflict is suspected of causing an increase in cancers among Iraqi children. Coming from anyone other than Robert Fisk, this proposition would be regarded as a wilful perversion of reality.

The headline states that DU is treated as a hazard in the UK. In fact, DU has a number of applications in the civil sector: ranging from shielding against radiation in hospitals to counterbalance weights in yacht keels and aircraft. DU can constitute a significant health problem only if it has been inhaled in relatively large quantities. Its chemical toxicity, moreover, is similar to that of other heavy metals such as lead. Again, this toxicity only becomes a hazard to health if ingested.

The only form in which DU can be inhaled is as one of the dust particles produced when a DU shell penetrates an extremely hard substance such as tank armour. These particles are extremely small and are rapidly diluted and dispersed by the weather into the environment. They become difficult to detect, even with the most sophisticated monitoring equipment, no further than a few hundred metres from the point of impact.

With regard to the health concerns of Gulf veterans, none of those so far examined by the Medical Assessment Programme has displayed symptoms consistent with exposure to DU. As everyone knows, this government has, from its earliest days in office, been engaged in a full and open investigation of the possible causes of Gulf veterans' illnesses. The teams conducting epidemiological studies into the health of UK Gulf veterans and their fam-

ilies are, therefore, aware that DU is one of the many possible exposures during the Gulf conflict which have been put forward as a potential cause of Gulf-related illnesses and they will be taking this into account in their studies.

LORD GILBERT
Minister of State for Defence
Procurement
Ministry of Defence
London SW1

All-night NHS

Sir: Roy Lilley propounds the idea that 24-hour working would be the saving of the National Health Service ("Politicians won't admit it, but closing hospitals is good for the NHS", 27 May).

Before this notion is taken seriously it would be wise to remember that human beings are diurnal. A mass of research work shows that people are considerably less efficient and effective working at night. Furthermore the chances of dying are greater at night than during daylight because most bodily functions are nocturnally slowed.

Thus if there were 24-hour working in those expensive hospitals, less efficient doctors and nurses would be dealing with more vulnerable patients – a poor formula for improving effectiveness. Human beings are neither computer chips nor Swiss watches that are immune to the time of day or night.

Professor RAINER GOLDSMITH
Eggington, Derbyshire

Sir: The most insulting part of Roy Lilley's article was the statement that equipment and operating theatres are "the NHS's most valuable assets". The NHS's most valuable assets are its hardworking staff, who provide a 24-hour health service to the people of Britain.

MARY GAWTHROP
London SE5

Sir: Roy Lilley does not reveal whether he has ever discussed his idea with a surgeon or a consultant. Spin-doctors may well want to work on us around the clock. I am not so sure about their medical counterparts.

SEAN MACKEN
Edgware, North London

What Nimbys forget

Sir: I am a divorced father of young children who live 200 miles away from where I live. I would live closer to them if work was available. I have a second home, the primary purpose of which is to ensure I have good quality contact with my children.

To maintain and travel to and

from this home I am sacrificing my ability to build up savings or a pension. I have to duplicate all the utilities I have in my London home. I also pay a second council tax, albeit at a reduced rate, but then, I do not make the same demands on local services that regular residents do. Increasing the tax on my second home would put my ability to maintain it and to see my children at risk.

The Nimbys (not in my backyard) of the Lake District (article, 20 May; letter, 25 May) have no insight into reasons for maintaining a second home, and are doubtless the same people who would oppose planning permission for low cost housing or indeed any development in their areas.

HENRY HARRINGTON
London NW5

School of Liverpool

Sir: Tom Lubbock does less than justice to Liverpool and its artists when he writes, in his article about the Liverpool Tate, that "Liverpool has no particular place in modern art history" ("Pile 'em high, send 'em up north", 26 May).

Liverpool School of Art has had some of the finest, most influential teachers in Britain. The city had a thriving Academy and to its cathedrals attracted many notable artists. Painters and sculptors such as Sam Walsh, John Edkins, Arthur Dooley, Adrian Henri, Nicholas Horsfield, Stuart Sutcliffe, Roderick Blison, Harry Houdless, Edward Carter Preston, Sean Rice, Maurice Cockrill and Martin Bell are a few who have contributed to the Liverpool tradition.

So far it has been left mainly to the Walker Art Gallery, the Bluecoat and commercial dealers to show the work. Undoubtedly the local Tate, like its counterpart in St Ives, can play a useful role too, but the will must be there.

DAVID BUCKHAM
London N1

Never too old

Sir: In her article about turning fifty (28 May) Bel Mooney bemoans the fact that she will never now backpack around India. I celebrate my 50th birthday in five weeks, and am doing just that: together with a friend who passes the same milestone in the same month I am backpacking round India this summer. Our route will cover over 2,000 miles from the deserts of Rajasthan to the beaches of Kerala. Pack your rucksack Bel – it's not too late to join us!

JULIA CHALLENGER
Canterbury

Plight of Czech Roma

Sir: I have studied the social and political situations of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic during the past two years. I am pleased to note that the British media is devoting more attention to Europe's most silent victims of racism ("Czech cities plan 'apartheid' wall around gypsy ghettos", 27 May). The situation is even more difficult than you portrayed. I have often been shocked by the violent reactions that otherwise respectable Czech citizens have towards their Roma neighbours.

Many of the Romanies who live in the Czech Republic today were relocated to the north Bohemian and Moravian industrial heartland as manual workers by the Czechoslovak Communist government in the 1950s. There never was a comprehensive resettlement plan that would help coexistence between old and new settlers. The consequences are obvious today.

Violence between the two communities is an everyday matter. In education, Roma children (who often cannot speak Czech very well) are placed in schools for less able children. In the work place, Czechs will not employ Romanies. While national unemployment rates are around 4 per cent, among the Romanies they are over 90 per cent.

There are, however, situations where Czechs and Romanies live well together, as in the southern Bohemian town of Krumlov. There are also some human rights organisations that bravely lobby government for more affirmative action.

From the UK, much can be done. As a prospective member of the European Union, the Czech Republic is very likely to listen to international pressures. The European Union has included the Roma question in the negotiations for accession. The EU human rights policy, however, is still embryonic. It is up to governments like the British to push human rights at the heart of the pre-accession strategy.

GUIDO DOLARA
St Antony's College, Oxford

Gamblers on the Net

Sir: Your report on Internet gambling (Network+, 26 May) raises interesting questions about the potential problems online gaming might create in the next few years.

Although there are few problem Internet gamblers, the situation will almost certainly change as more and more people go online. The Internet will become technologically more sophisticated, allowing faster speeds, which will facilitate "hard" gambling (those activities which allow punters to chase their losses).

There are also issues such as age regulation (how can you be sure that adolescents do not gamble using a parent's credit card?), gambling in the workplace (how do you prevent staff using free Internet access?) and the wider concern of how Internet gambling – which has no geographical boundaries – is regulated under each country's own gaming laws.

Dr MARK GRIFFITHS
Reader in Psychology
Nottingham Trent University

Fuming

Sir: On passive smoking, Tim Short (letter, 29 May) whinges that non-smokers cannot choose not to inhale. The same points can be made against car drivers forcing others to inhale their fumes. There would not appear to be much point in banning smoking in public places if the air in the streets is just as bad.

WILLIAM PROCTER
(a smoking cyclist)
Nottingham

What c
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HOWARD JACOBSON

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What could be more harmless than a pub full of songsters?



HOWARD JACOBSON

IDLY LEAFING through *Mein Kampf* recently, the way you do, I came upon some startling observations I'd somehow missed on all my previous readings. (This is the trouble with easy bedtime reading: you don't attempt to read the text as conscientiously as you should.)

Contrary to our common assumption that there was nothing the Führer liked better of an evening than to settle in with a bottle of schnapps, a plate of Schweinswürstchen, and a picture book containing caricatures of gypsies, homosexuals and semites, in actuality he was as bitterly opposed to comic stereotyping as any north London librarian.

Jokes about ill-favoured ethnic minorities, cartoons, linericks, funny songs – all that these did, he maintained, was to render familiar, harmless and ultimately rather likeable, the very degenerates they offered to mock.

There is more than a little truth in this. I remember hearing "Hitler has only got one ball/The other is in the Free Trade Hall" for the first time in the school playground and feeling rather sorry for the old sociopath. Since most of us as yet had only one ball to speak of ourselves – one if we were lucky – we felt a natural affinity with him.

What's more, we at least had reason to expect that, in due course, our second one would reveal itself, whereas at Hitler's age (we didn't yet realise he was dead) the disability had to be presumed to be permanent.

The fact that he'd left or lost it in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, also worked on our sympathies. The Free Trade Hall was where we were regularly taken by the school to hear John Barbirolli conduct the Hallé Orchestra. So we knew just how easy it was to lose things there – white mice, marbles, our hearts to girls from the Notre Dame Convent in Cheetham Hill, and, of course, our concentration.

How many times, not yet into the second movement of a Beethoven symphony, did my thoughts go wandering around the auditorium only to settle at last on Hitler and the question of the precise whereabouts (under my very seat perhaps? inside Barbirolli's podium? down the harpist's mournful décolletage) of the second half of his *Mannlichkeit*.

That's what funny songs do: they domesticate and humanise the alien. Not my point, Hitler's. And if you can't trust Hitler on what does and doesn't make for cordial relations between antagonistic communities, who can you trust?

In the light of which, might not the decision of Camden Town authorities to arrest and prosecute football fans caught singing funny songs about foreigners in north London pubs and bars during the World Cup, be the wrong one?

I understand their concern. June is a hot

month, whether or not there is a World Cup, and heat brings out the drinkers and drinkers brings out the xenophobes. Do we really want to see Camden High Street thronged with columns of scarf-waving motor aphasics 100 deep, gurgling Sol through wedges of lime and chanting "Three German Officers Crossed the Rhine", if that is, as I doubt, what they chant these days?

On aesthetic grounds, we do not. But as far as racial harmony goes, isn't it better that they sing than that they don't? Speaking as someone likely to be walking in the opposite direction, alone and humming Haydn, I'd feel a lot safer hearing communal singing coming my way than the repressed menace of a pack of bull males sunk in sullen silence. Singing is what you do when you are happy, or at least seeking consolation in pretend happiness, and the happy are generally harmless. Hitler's complaint, not mine.

It is here that I must part company with Councillor Sybil Shine who speaks for Camden on such ideological matters as these, and who herself must have been the subject of a few comic ditties in her time – Shine, Rhine, wine, schwein, to say nothing, since we're also talking football, of Sybil and dribble. "It's not so much the singing," the councillor has been reported as saying, "it's the violence that follows it."

Well, you can only tell it as you find it, and I am unable to remember the last time I suffered violence at the hands of singers. Are there any murderers whose signature, so to speak, was a tune? Who harmonised as they hacked?

I vaguely recall a deviant whistler, but no singer comes to mind, unless we count whoever it was who sang "Danny Boy" psychopathically in a movie, which I think would be unfair since a movie is fiction and "Danny Boy" isn't festive. I suppose you could say that the Three Tenors will be committing murder again in the now *de rigueur* World Cup Screaming concert, but we mean something different by that.

The King's Singers? Anybody been beaten to a pulp by them? The Andrews Sisters? The Mills Brothers? The Three Degrees? The Inkspots? Abba? The Vienna Boys Choir? Idling down Kärntner Strasse, past the Wiener Staatsoper, has anyone ever been set upon by 200 boy sopranos in choirboy surplices singing the *Te Deum* as they put the boot in?

The *Te Deum* isn't racist, do I hear you say? But are we not told that the ostentatious worship of one god is potentially offensive to those who worship another? And isn't offence the very last thing we ever want to cause, especially in Camden Town? The *Te Deum*, what is more, lacks the communal comic verve of "Three German Officers", and therefore must be less conducive to the forging of those warm inter-racial affections which were the bane of the Führer's life.

So, it would be best all round if the citizens of Camden could be allowed to sing about our friends the Germans and the French in peace. But if they want to sing the *Te Deum* after England goes down to Tunisia I don't mind that either. Since music is the food of love, and melody soothes the savage breast, sing on.

Howard Jacobson's new novel 'No More Mister Nice Guy' has just been published by Jonathan Cape.

History need not be bunk – in fact, it can be put to positive use



TREVOR PHILLIPS

THE hand of history has rested heavily on our shoulders this week. In London, veterans of the war in the Far East whistled and hooted half a century of bitterness at the Emperor of Japan. Tony Blair called for Britons to look to the future and was ignored.

In Northern Ireland, in spite of all the talk of a new start, the return of something like conventional politics has unleashed a barrage of recrimination.

And in the Indian sub-continent, two nations which can still barely afford to feed their people have come to the brink of a war that could escalate 50 years of conflict into a hideous nuclear exchange.

In each case, there are many still alive who played a part in the historical events, and who can still offer a version of them to explain the reason for keeping the wounds open. The pain of the protagonists is still real and their losses are undeniable.

The argument deployed by those who want to keep these events alive in the public memory is that used by the American philosopher George Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Perhaps, but the past is the past and history moves on. The future should be informed by history, not imprisoned by it. It would be tragic if new possibilities were spurned in order to settle old men's scores, the detail of which most people cannot recall.

A knowledge of what has gone before should be used to set us free from the shackles of the past; instead it seems to be dragging us back into bygone conflicts and traditions. And it is possible to do something positive with painful memories.

For the past year, I have had the opportunity to work with the survivors of another historical event that took place 50 years ago, which has shown a rather different face of remembrance.

On June 21, 1948, an old troopship called *Empire Windrush* brought 500 young men



The man who debunked history: Henry Ford with the first and 10-millionth Model-T

Photograph: Hulton Getty

and women from the Caribbean to seek the adventure of a new life in Britain. What they found was not what they expected; and the accumulated anger over decades of alienation gave us the fires of Brixton in 1981 and 1985.

Last week, the BBC and the charity that represents those who came on that first voyage launched a season of celebration. Some of the talk at the launch was of a history of exclusion and discrimination; but it was also of pride in overcoming the hostility, and in resolving the conflicts.

The reliving of this history is not just for the benefit of those who made it, but for their descendants. The Windrush survivors are being honoured for one principal reason: telling their tale for the first time offers Black Britons a secure place in the story of the British people. In this sense, I have seen history being used to heal a divide rather than to widen it.

But does any of this matter in Cool Britannia? I think it does. Times of rapid change are precisely the moments when history matters most. One reason is that we need to know where we are going.

As we peep headlong into the uncharted future, propelled by new technologies and huge global shifts in economics and politics, the only map we have is the past. It cannot be definitive; but it is the best we have.

The error we too often make is that instead of using the past as a guide to the future, we try to retrace our steps.

In Northern Ireland, the extremist parties on both sides see themselves as the keepers of the flame for traditions and cultures under threat from hostile forces. There's nothing wrong with that, except when you use the light of the flame to march resolutely backwards.

The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote that "if men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us... but passion and party blind our eyes". The Rev Ian Paisley, Mr Gerry Adams and the governments of India and Pakistan should read those words with care.

The other reason for us to pay attention to history is that as well needing to know where we are going, we need to know who we are. History is the key to identity, and without recourse to it, societies are easy prey to tyrants who want to impose their own vision of the past on the people, in order to serve their present purposes.

Henry Ford's famous dictum "history is bunk" is not often read in full. But the whole quotation reveals the depth of Ford's authoritarianism and his certainty that technology could revolutionise the world. What Ford actually told the *Chicago Tribune* was that "History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want

tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today."

Ford was speaking in 1916, as men died by the thousand in the trenches of Europe. The Bolsheviks were about to usher in a regime that would so refine the art of rewriting history to serve the present that a generation of Russians would virtually forget their own traditions.

Ford's uncompromising modernism, set against this background made some sense – mass production would offer a standard of living and security to workers they had never before experienced, in exchange for their becoming efficient elements in the production process.

But his words might just as easily have been uttered by Stalin or Hitler, both of whom shared Ford's certainty that modernism would make history unnecessary, except as a tool of propaganda. It was all of a piece with a vision of society that would crush individuality in the service of the state, whether capitalist or otherwise. And we know where all that ended up. Thank God for the dustbin of history.

None of this should prejudice us against the value of history as a vital key to our present and future. We simply have to ensure that the account we use is complete and inclusive.

In this country, perhaps the most important test over the next few years will be the way that we redefine and reassert what it means to be English. One of the consequences of Scottish and Welsh devolution has been to awaken the English to the fact that they too have a history that tells them who they are now.

But most English people have very little clue what that history and identity is, and some express it in the most reactionary and negative way: which we will probably hear much of during the upcoming World Cup. But books are being written, films are being made and documentaries shot that discuss the idea of Englishness.

The most powerful image of England ever cast must surely be Blake's *Jerusalem*. It has become a cliché for rolling green hills and neat little chocolate box villages. Actually Blake's Satanic mills lay on the south bank of the river Thames, and his England was a nation of workers; his appeal was for dignity for the labourer.

We need history; but we need to see the past for what it was, not what we want it to be. Otherwise, we end up inventing new reasons to relive old conflicts. The Indians and Pakistanis, the Northern Irish and the Far East veterans need not let go of the past, but they should no longer be enslaved by it.

Please, Sayle-san, lend your bank some money

Murray Sayle tells a tale of a Japanese financial panic that is starting in his village

I WAS AT HOME in our Japanese mountain village one snowy Monday morning last December when a polite young man tapped at our door.

We know him well. He works at our local building society, which takes deposits and lends to buy homes. "Can you help us out, Sayle-san?" he asked. "If you have any money around the house, please come and pay it in straight away. It's only for 24 hours. You can take it out again tomorrow."

"We'd like to help," said my wife, Jenny, who is English and sensible, "but as it happens, we don't have an account with you. And what you have just said doesn't exactly persuade us to open one. Why do you need my house-keeping money?"

"Well, it's no big deal," he said. "I'll try next door." And off he went.

I went round later to ask our visitor what was going on. His new office, all glass and chrome, stands out among the old wooden houses of our village street. "We don't keep cash here over the weekend," he explained. "I was afraid that someone would try to take money out this morning, the word would get round that we couldn't pay, and in an hour we'd be cleaned out."

Then the phone rang. "If you have any money in the Yokohama Bank get it out," a friendly neighbour advised. "They'll be the next to go."

Jenny went down to look and, sure enough, there were queues to make withdrawals. It turned out to be just a rumour, but the fact that it was being

spread about one of Japan's oldest banks shows how jumpy the Japanese are getting these days.

Oriental windiness? I consulted a couple of economic classics I have been reading recently, *Manias, Panics and Crashes*, by Charles P Kindleberger, and his even more ominously titled *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*.

During the great British crash of 1826, the *Times* reported, "a panic seized upon the public, such as had never been witnessed before: everybody begging for money – money – but money was hardly upon any condition to be had."

The Bank of Japan has been pouring liquidity (bankerese for cash) into the Japanese economy since 1989; the presses, it is said, are thundering like Hondas, churning out banknotes, stacking them up in the cellars against – what?

Readers who get lost in the blizzard of zeros on the financial pages still know that the principle of fractional reserve banking, invented in Florence about the time Donatello was chiselling David, is that a lot more can be loaned out than is actually in the vault, provided everyone doesn't ask for his or her money back at the same time. It is this quirk of human credulity that, in fact, makes banking possible.

Credit, we recall, is the Latin for "he believes it", and as long as belief is strong, the cupboard can actually be bare, behind the imposing facades favoured by bank architects.

We humans are adept at inventing new forms of money: credit cards, cheques, certificates of deposit, IOUs, even the standing offer of a five-year pay-day are all forms of money; the list is endless. So when enough people sincerely want to become rich by buying assets to sell them again, or just buying the right to sell them in the next punter in line, shortage of cash, east or west, has never yet stopped them. Something like this happened in

Tokyo in the late 1980s – a bubble or speculative boom, based on big-city real estate and shares with the slightest land components, even as slender as a link to memberships in imaginary golf clubs. At its height, one memorable calculation showed that Emperor Akihito's palace in Tokyo, about the size of London's Hyde Park, was worth more than Canada.

In January 1990, Japan's supply of optimists ran out, as it always does. There ensued what Germans, who often have them, call a *Torachesspanik* – a rush to get out before the door shuts.

The banks were left with a package of bad loans totalling, by the government's own admission, ¥76 trillion, or around \$540bn – but, if we include the deficit in the Japanese postal savings

system, it was probably nearer a round \$1 trillion. Oriental inscrutability alone has enabled the Japanese bureaucrats to conceal this enormous hole in the national finances for close on eight years, while hoping for something to turn up. It has, however, turned down. And it has happened in, of all places, the lands of tinkling temple bells and pedigreed fat cats (both feline and human), South-East Asia – once part of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere and now Japan's valley of despond.

"Bubble" is a misleading metaphor for what happens when greed temporarily overcomes fear in a collective psyche. "Boll" would be better, because when a boll bursts it leaves a hole. Bust follows boom, as the process goes into reverse. Japan has been in and out of

a deflationary spiral since 1990; and as John Maynard Keynes observed, there is a degree of deflation no banking system can withstand.

The one bright spot has been Japan's mighty export industries, whose worldwide market shares have replaced the lost empire as Japan's manifest destiny. Exporting from a depressed economy which imports the bare minimum, however, puts your currency up and up, and eventually chokes off your exports – the British predicament that sparked the Jarrow march.

In 1985 a dollar bought almost ¥240. By 1992 it was down to ¥80. Exports became all but unexportable. Japan's response was to move production offshore, where meek labour

for as little as a dollar a day beckoned from among the palm trees. Altogether Japan invested \$271bn in other Asian countries in the mid 1990s. The result was to duplicate in those cleaner, greener lands (but not for long, after the factories arrived) Japan's own bloated export industries, all competing for the same markets in Europe and the US.

As the competition got hotter, the Japanese poured more into Asia, blowing up bigger credit-fed bubbles. A year ago "international specialisation", sincerely wanting to be even richer, selected the Thai baht as the easiest to pick off, in a practised short-sell. The Asian chain of bubbles collapsed, the most spectacular, of course, being Indonesia, with blood flowing in the streets.

Indonesia was also Japan's biggest

borrower. Asia had been taking a quarter of Japan's exports, and the loans there suddenly joined the "non-performing" mountain back home. An important bank and one of Japan's "Big Four" brokerage houses went bust. Two weeks later the young man was at our door, asking for Jenny's house-keeping money.

Let us, a little uneasily perhaps, reconsult our economic guru Kindleberger. On the classical path to depression, he says, we first see displacement, a move the system is unused to – such as the Japanese-led expedition to South-East Asia, perhaps?

Then we have what used to be called overtrading: lenders who have to keep on lending to borrowers who can't stop borrowing. This is followed by a phase of distress, the whole credit mechanism stretched taut as a Japanese drum.

In the distress phase, says Kindleberger, demand falls, and supply follows. People are thrown out of work, demand falls some more, and so down the deadly spiral.

At least two remedies, contradictory, it is true, could be tried: either let the fires of speculation burn themselves out, no matter who gets singed; or, conversely, use public money, that is, our future taxes, to prop up every bad loan, every hungry speculator, every bent politician, so the relatively good times can keep rolling for us all.

The Japanese, as they often do, are trying both simultaneously, which is not doing much for their business confidence. But surely an intelligent, caring world system won't let some selfish impulse, some bad idea, some purely temporary shortage ...

Just a tick. Somebody's at the door.

A longer version of this article appears in this week's 'New Statesman'.

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Barry Goldwater

THE CANDIDATE might have been sent straight from Central Casting. He was tall, tanned, handsome, and he looked as if he had spent many hours in the saddle, which indeed he had. As he moved through his speech, the thousands of Republican delegates assembled in the Cow Palace arena in San Francisco were tense. They had been bitterly divided, and the candidate had only been chosen after a struggle which had rent the party to its foundations and forced it to examine its deepest convictions.

"Those who seek to live your lives for you," he had begun, to take your liberties in return for relieving you of your responsibilities - those who elevate the state and downgrade the citizen - must not see a world in which earthly power can be substituted for divine will. This nation was founded upon the rejection of that notion.

And now he reached his famous climax.

Let our Republicanism, so focused and so dedicated, not be made fuzzy and futile by unthinking and stupid labels.

(He meant "conservative" and "moderate".)

I would remind you that extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.

The hall erupted in a frenzy of shouting. The moderates screamed their rage and fear in immoderate terms. And there was nothing conservative about the way the conservatives roared their triumphant approval.

Senator Barry M. Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, was the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1964. If Ronald Reagan was to be the conservative Messiah, Barry Goldwater was his John the Baptist.

His acceptance speech in San Francisco was the defining moment of his career. In the short term, it launched him on one of the most disastrous campaigns for the presidency in the 20th century. By proclaiming his own extremism, Goldwater had opened himself to being presented by his formidable Democratic opponent, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, as a warmonger, even a madman. "In your guts," jeered the Democrats, "you know he's nuts!" Near the end of the campaign

Goldwater was finally destroyed by one of the first classic political ads on television. It showed a little girl counting the petals of a daisy. As the countdown ends, a mushroom cloud fills the sky.

In a longer perspective, Goldwater's courageous, if ill-judged, campaign in 1964 marked the watershed in the long road of the conservative revival in the United States. At the end of the Second World War, with Franklin Roosevelt in the White House, all but a stubborn remnant of Americans had accepted the welfare state policies of the New Deal. Conservatism was a marginalised, even disgraced, political philosophy.

In the 1950s, the Republican party was controlled by safely moderate Republicans who gambled but did not challenge most of the New Deal agenda. It was also increasingly divided between these predominantly eastern leaders and the impatient westerners who were typified and represented by Barry Goldwater. His victory at the Cow Palace in July 1964 was both the achievement of a skillfully managed political insurgency, and the dawn of a new, ideologically intransigent conservative Republican party. Towards the end of the 1964 campaign, a group of Californian conservatives clubbed together to pay for a television broadcast in support of Goldwater. The man they chose to make the speech was Ronald Reagan.

The 1964 campaign was the zenith of Goldwater's career. It stamped on the public mind a strangely misleading picture of the man's real personality, a distortion to which Goldwater himself contributed by his fondness for violent rhetoric. He was genuinely very conservative in his beliefs and opinions. He once defended Senator Joe McCarthy, for example, by saying of McCarthy's critics,

All the discredited figures of the Hiss-Yalta period of American dishonesty have crawled out from under their logs... these people have dipped in the snout pot to discredit Senator McCarthy and his work against Communism.

Yet if he displayed both strong opinions and occasionally an imperious temper, he was personally an amiable, even a laid-back man. He was in many respects a typical western American. He was not by tem-



"In your guts, you know he's nuts": Goldwater acknowledging defeat in the 1964 US presidential election

perament either an intellectual or a political manipulator; he loved to pilot himself, and to ride on horseback in the spacious landscape of his native Arizona, of which he took some memorably sensitive photographs. He was a man of genuine warmth and charm, who formed friendships with many in Washington who by no means shared his opinions, in-

cluding, for example, John F. Kennedy himself.

Like many westerners, he had inherited a suspicion of the Federal government which he regarded almost as a colonial power. This attitude was not born of the government's remoteness, but of its omnipresence. Much of the state was owned by the government, as national park, national forest,

which inspired one Jewish wit to say, "I always knew that the first Jewish candidate for the White House would be an Episcopalian."

He inherited a controlling interest in the family department store in fast-growing Phoenix with branches elsewhere in the state and was more than comfortably off. He served as chair-

man of Goldwaters from 1937

to 1953, and thereafter was president of the company. He built himself a beautiful house in the desert near Phoenix.

Educated at Staunton Military Academy in Virginia and at the University of Arizona, Goldwater served in the US Army Air Force in the Second World War, and flew as a pilot. After he returned to civilian life, he continued to fly in the Air Force reserve, in which he was promoted to Major-General. He first got involved in politics on the Phoenix school board. In 1952 he was elected to the United States Senate, defeating no less an opponent than the Democratic majority leader, Senator Ernest W. McFarland.

Goldwater did not at first have a high profile in the Senate, though his strong defence of Joe McCarthy when the Senate was voting on his censure in 1954 did attract attention. People did begin to look up when he defeated McFarland, who in the meantime had been elected governor, a second time in 1958.

He first emerged as a national figure in 1959 when he became the senior member of the Senate labour committee. Its able counsel, Michael Bernstein, suggested to Goldwater that he might become a voice for "the forgotten American", and he became a champion for conservatives when almost single-handed he defeated what they saw as a bad labour bill introduced by Senator John F. Kennedy and so opened the way for the anti-labour Landrum-Griffiths bill.

By 1960, Goldwater was being mentioned as a future presidential candidate. In 1962 he published a best-selling book called *Why Not Victory?* (Later he published a number of books about Arizona, some illustrated with his own photographs.) After Nixon's defeat in that year by Kennedy, Goldwater emerged as the champion of the right wing of the party against Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania and other moderates. He was taken up by southern conservatives troubled by the threat of Federally sponsored desegregation, as well as by the conservative intellectuals grouped around William F. Buckley's *National Review*.

As 1964 approached, a bril-

liant campaign in Goldwater's favour was mounted by the political scientist turned political operator F. Clifton White and a small band of conservative enthusiasts. Goldwater, however, infuriated his own supporters by his Hamlet-like hesitations and changes of mind. When he did win the nomination, he hastened his own downfall by refusing to make a gesture to the defeated moderates, choosing instead as his Vice-Presidential running mate the obscure but sharp-tongued William Miller.

After his brief moment in the national spotlight and the humiliation of his defeat, brought about in part by one of the most ruthlessly partisan campaigns the supposedly non-partisan major newspapers like the *New York Times* have ever descended to, Goldwater did not succumb to bitterness.

He resigned from the Senate in order to run for President, but returned in 1969 and remained there until 1987. In 1969 his son, Barry M. Goldwater Jr, was elected to Congress as a Republican from California.

As the decades passed, the father became a respected as well as a well-liked elder statesman. He was a leading member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and a vigilant chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the watchdog body supervising the Central Intelligence Agency.

He remained a committed though thoughtful conservative, but displayed his independence of mind on many occasions. In 1984, for example, when the CIA was found to have been mining harbours in Nicaragua in defiance of legislation passed by the Democratic majority in Congress, Goldwater exploded. "This is a hell of a way to run a railroad!" he wrote to Bill Casey, the director of Central Intelligence. "I am pissed off!"

Godfrey Hodgson

Barry Morris Goldwater, politician; born Phoenix, Arizona 1 January 1909; Republican Senator from Arizona 1952-64, 1969-87; married 1934 Margaret Johnson (died 1985; two sons, two daughters); 1992 Susan McMurray Wechsler; died Phoenix 29 May 1998.

Lana Morris



Morris: 'a sweet girl'
Photograph: Kobal Collection

A PERKY, bright-eyed brunette, Lana Morris brought a refreshing liveliness and sense of humour to British films in the Fifties.

One of a group of Rank starlets that included Barbara Murray, Rona Anderson and Honor Blackman, she was the below-stairs maid snatching moments to read racy novels in *Spring in Park Lane*, and Norman Wisdom's girlfriend in *Trouble in Store*. Her marriage to the radio and television producer Ronnie Waldman was one of the happiest in show business. Later she was a star of television soaps such as *The Forsyte Saga* and *Howard's Way*, and was about to

appear in a new stage production at the time of her death.

Born Pamela Matthews in Ruislip, Middlesex, Morris came from a theatrical family. Her great-grandfather was in Irving's Drury Lane company and her mother was the silent film actress Corinne Burford. At the age of 16 she played her first professional role in the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park and the same year made her screen debut (under her real name) as the wife of boffin David Tomlinson in *School for Secrets* (1946), but she first received major attention when she was given the part of the flirtatious maid in *Spring in Park*

Lane (1948), the best of the Anna Neagle/Michael Wilding "London" films and an enormous success.

Though Morris was primarily a supporting player, with star roles only in B movies, her presence in such films as *Trotter* (1949), *The Children Hundreds* (1949) and *The Woman in Question* (1950) always provided extra sparkle, and she was rewarded with the female lead of the shop girl to whom Norman Wisdom sang "Don't Laugh at Me" in his final starring film *Trouble in Store* (1953). "She was a sweet girl," said Wisdom recently. Morris partnered the comic again in

one of his best films, *Man of the Moment* (1955), and had leading roles in such supporting features as *Black 13* (1953) and *Radio Cab Murder* (1964), but by the end of the decade her name had dropped well down the cast list of such films as *No Trees in the Street* (1958) and *Pusspot to Shame* (1959).

Having started on radio in *The Forces Show*, Morris now moved into television, working steadily both as actress and panelist. It was on the set of his television show *Kaleidoscope* that she met the BBC producer Ronnie Waldman, fondly remembered for his "Puzzle Corner" radio spots in the For-

ties, and later Head of BBC Light Entertainment. Waldman co-produced the television scripts about a hotel detective, *The Inch Man* (1951), in which Morris featured. Though he was 16 years her senior, their marriage was a successful one and their son Simon was born in 1957, after which Morris returned to acting - she and Waldman were publicised as a model example of a couple combining two media careers with a happy home life.

On stage, Morris played in *Move Over Mrs Markham* (1971), and her prolific television work included the role of barmaid at the luxury hotel

run by Margaret Lockwood in *The Royalty* (1957-58) and a part in the distinguished BBC serialisation of *The Forsyte Saga* (1967). Waldman died in 1978 and Morris moved from their Hertfordshire home to a small London house. A decade later she revealed a new glamorous image as the powerful Vanessa Andenberg in the BBC's series centred on a South Coast boatyard, *Howard's Way*.

Tom Vallance

Pamela Matthews (Lana Morris), actress; born Ruislip, Middlesex 11 March 1930; married Ronnie Waldman (died 1978; one son); died Slough, Berkshire 27 May 1998.

Lazar Saryan, composer, died Yerevan, Armenia 27 May, aged 77. A student of Shostakovich; one of his most popular pieces, "Symphony Panel", was based on four landscapes by his father, a well-known Armenian painter. Chantal Mauduit, mountaineer, died Mount Dhaulagiri I, Nepal 16 May, aged 34. France's best-known female climber, she had scaled six of the world's 14 peaks above 8,000 metres.

Mordechai Strigler, writer and journalist, died New York 10 May, aged 74. Editor since 1987 of *Forverts* ("Forward"), the oldest Yiddish newspaper in the world. Bill Bowman, businessman, died 11 May, aged 65. Chairman of the Covent Garden Market Authority 1988-98.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

BARRACLOUGH: On 28 May 1998 to Sally (nee Fredericks) and Bruce, a son, Charles Frederick, brother for George.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2802 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2011) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette notices (weddings, funerals, obituaries, marriages, divorces) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

Changing of the Guard
TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 4pm. F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 4pm. TO-MORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. No 7 Cheshire Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards.

Marriages

Mr A. Lowe and Miss H. Hindler
The marriage took place yesterday at Marylebone Register Office between Allan Lowe and Hazel Hindler.

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr Neville Braybrooke, writer, 75; Mr William Cleland, thoracic surgeon, 86; Mr Ray Cooney, theatrical producer, 66; Mr Peter Ellis, actor, 62; The Marquess of Ely, former headmaster, 85; Mr Harry Erfield, writer and comedian, 37; The Right Rev John Gladwin, Bishop of Guildford, 56; Mr Christopher Haskins, chairman, Northern Foods, 61; Sir David Knox, former MP, 65; Mr Timothy Llewellyn, Director, Henry Moore Foundation, 51; Sir Ian Lloyd, former MP, 77; Mr Tim Loughton, MP, 36; Dr John Marks, former Chairman, British Medical Association, 73; Dr Robert Mercer, Headmaster, Prior Park College, 49; Mr Antony Moore, former diplomat, 81; Lord Richard QC, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords, 66; Mr Tim Waterstone, bookseller, 59; Mr Philip Whitehead, MEP, writer, television producer and former Chairman, Consumers' Association, 61; Mr Bob Willis, cricketer, 49; Sir Frederick Wood, honorary life president, Croda International, 72. TO-MORROW: Prince Rainier III of Monaco, 75; Miss Lynda Bellingham, actress, 50; Sir Derek Birley, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Ulster, 72; Mr Robert Blizzard MP, 48; Maj-Gen Keith Burch, former Director Personnel, Defence Staff, Ministry of Defence, 67; Miss Judy Campbell, actress and singer, 82; Professor Dame Jane Clark, Professor of Nursing, Middlesex University, 57; Sir John Daniel, Vice-Chancellor,

Open University, 56; Judge Linda Davies, circuit judge, 53; Mr Clint Eastwood, actor, 68; Admiral Sir James Eberle, former Director, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 71; Mr Andrew Girma, jeweller, 77; Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman, ICI, 66; Miss Debbie Moore, aerobics exponent, 52; Mr John Prescott MP, Deputy Prime Minister, 60; Lord Sandberg, banker, 71; Sir Neil Shaw, chairman, Tate and Lyle, 67; Miss Isabel Skelton, former diplomat, 71; Sir William Taylor, President, Society for Research in Higher Education, 68; Sir Michael Turner, High Court judge, 67; Mr Terry Waite, former Archbishop of Canterbury's adviser on Anglican Communion Affairs, 59.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia, 1672. Deaths: Joan of Arc, burnt at the stake at Rouen 1431. On this day the first hovercraft flight took place at Cowes, Isle of Wight, 1959. Today is the Feast of St Euphrasie of Ravenna, St Ferdinand of Castile, St Isaac of Constantinople, St Joan of Arc, St Luke Kirby, St Madelgaisis or Magdalen and St Walstan. TO-MORROW: Births: William Heath Robinson, illustrator, 1872. Deaths: Adolf Eichmann, Nazi war criminal, hanged, 1962. On this day the White Star liner *Titanic* was launched at Belfast, 1911. Tomorrow is Whit Sunday and the Feast Day of Saints Cyprian, Cyprianus, Camelliana and Protus, St Mechtildis of Edelsheim and St Petronilla.

Lectures

TODAY
Victoria and Albert Museum: Terry Blaxham, "Medieval Clothing Depicted in Art", 2.30pm.

FAITH & REASON

We struggle with the cosmic powers of consumerism

The season of the spirit must take us into a murkier realm than might be supposed, writes Elaine Storkey.

WE LIVE in an era where "spirit" is back in vogue. There are still people around who are materialists by intellectual commitment, believing only in practicality and what we can perceive through the senses. But they are a dwindling hand. Most people now readily acknowledge that what we see or hear is only a very small part of the complex reality that exists; contemporary scientific research makes it hard for us to believe anything else. What is more, we recognise that many things which matter most in our daily lives lie beyond our senses: love, values, morality, time, space, the past, persons, communities, even logic. So it has become so much easier to accept that the world is a intricate mixture of what is seen and unseen, and that the unseen includes the spiritual. The spiritual is part of our own selves also, for we are more than anatomy, neurology and cell structures.

There is a problem here, though. This idea of the spiritual can become a vague, amorphous category which has no shape or structure. We can talk of "spiritual values" or of something having a "spiritual quality", by which we usually mean something ethereal and profound, but we are not always sure what. Or we can identify the spiritual with situations where we feel moved or exhilarated, until it seems as if there are spirits everywhere: in the trees swaying in the wind, the waves lapping on the shore, the rugged boulders on the cliffs. In effect we turn the spiritual into an nebulous, benign zone, an alternative realm beyond the physical which holds the most sublime experiences for people who delve deeply. And those who urge us to develop our spirit tell us that we can then transcend material existence and experience the world aright.

Yet developing our spirituality does not automatically lead us gently towards truth and beauty. Identifying the spiritual is not a single, neutral zone. Nor is it necessarily benign. It is a place of contest, and we are close to the centre of the battle. For there are many rival forces after our spirits, and those

which we recognise least have the greatest power. Consumerism is one of them, claiming our allegiance as thoroughly in the spiritual realm as in the financial. Every 15 minutes it broadcasts its message that it is blessed to consume, and invites us to make this the central spiritual truth of our lives. But when we allow such commercialism to feed us, our spirits become thin. As we face these contests every day the idea of the spiritual as a neutral or benign realm soon flies in the face of our real experience. We find, for example, we can be invaded by a spirit of greed more easily than one of generosity, of bitterness rather than love, of injustice rather than fairness. In fact we can become all too aware of quite sinister forces making a bid for our spiritual lives and demanding our energy. So it is not the existence of the spiritual that deepens our experience of reality; it is how we allow our spirits to be moulded.

The earliest Christian writers were in no doubt about this point, insisting that "our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against... cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil". It is no less a struggle when evil masquerades nonchalantly as normality, and

spirituality itself becomes neutralised. What is needed is a way of somehow exposing the spiritual realm, allowing what is unseen to be seen, so we can separate the spirit of goodness from the spirits of destruction. At one level this exposure takes each day, in the attitudes people exhibit in their lives. Violent anger, jealousy, strife, impurity, quarrels, unfairness, idolatry are reflections of a distorted spirituality, whereas love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, generosity, self-control are described as fruits of the Holy Spirit of God whose arrival among Jesus's disciples after the Resurrection is celebrated by Christians at Pentecost tomorrow. Then the Holy Spirit spoke not just to people's spirits, but to their understanding also; came not just to the spiritual world, but to the world that we see and hear. For there are not two worlds but one: the creation of the loving God who calls us to live our lives with integrity and spiritual discernment.

Today we struggle against contemporary powers which would control our culture, and shape the spirituality of our culture. And we have been given the responsibility of choosing the spiritual direction which leads to freedom rather than servitude.

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Second and third-liners take up the running

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

SELL in May and go away, probably the oldest of the stock market proverbs, has once again turned out to be completely wide of the mark. Although Footsie has dived and daltied throughout the month the rest of the market has been in rampant form as second and third-liners have taken up the running from the rather faded looking blue chips.

As Footsie has fallen just 57.6 points to 5,870.7 supporting indices have made dramatic progress.

The mid cap has surged nearly 300 points, hitting a peak this week, and the small cap has climbed 127 to a high.

The merry month of May did not, however, enjoy a rapturous close. Worries still persist about Asian markets and Moscow's steady display does not carry much conviction.

A nagging feeling that domestic interest rates could be set for a surprise increase already retarded sentiment.

Trading volume looked high but big trades in the once crippled Queens Moat Houses, the hotel chain, halved turnover.

OMH jumped 4.5p to 36.5p, highest since the shares returned from suspension three years ago, as Banque Nationale de Paris Suisse sold its 17 per cent stake. It was placed by stockbroker Cazenove with institutional investors. Most of the French interest was acquired in the low teens.

Helped by the 167 million recorded OMH volume, market turnover topped 1 billion shares.

Asda, contemplating a trading alliance with Kingfisher, fell 1p to 182p. The most flirtatious Footsie constituent is also rumoured to be talking about a possible trading pact with Storehouse, up 10p to 279p. Positive comments from Salomon Smith Barney also helped sentiment.

Hillsdown, on the dramatic and sudden breakdown of its

merger talks with Unigate, slumped 25.5p to 183p. Unigate, expressing relief that the French Dassault Aviation to research hi-tech systems for combat aircraft.

Compess, the contract caterer, jumped 85p to 1270p on Rentokil initial bid hopes and indications that the shares could be joining Morgan Stanley's influential international index. Rentokil was again heavily traded, gaining 12p to 427.5p. MFI struggled up just 1.5p to 79p, on talk of corporate action.

Brewer Bass frothed 33p higher to 1,125p. Morgan Stanley support was responsible. The investment house has apparently dropped General Electric Co from its buy list in favour of Bass. GEC fell 4p to 502p.

Beazer, the house builder, managed a further 11p gain to 231p on persistent chatter that a bid is being prepared. The shares are at their highest since they returned to market in 1994.

British Aerospace, 24p up at 543p, responded to the development of a joint venture with the French Dassault Aviation to research hi-tech systems for combat aircraft.

On the banking pitch, HSBC gained 57p to 1,600p after a bullish trading statement which prompted Morgan Stanley to produce a near 2,200p target.

Booker, the food group, held at 296p against 479p a few years ago. The yearly meeting is due next week when details of a strategic review should be known. A break-up is thought likely.

Computer group CMG traded at 1,720p, an effective 55p gain, after its bonus issue. The slimming operation did not, however, go to well in Amsterdam, where confusion prompted a share suspension.

Internet Technology's run

continued with a 13.5p gain to 179.5p.

Spargo Consulting, where an American bid has been agreed, rose 6.5p to 284p. Comino, an IT group, put on 16p to a 270p peak. The shares have climbed more than 100p in a few weeks. There was the inevitable takeover talk.

Delancy, an obscure property group, was comfortably the day's top performer, jumping 46 per cent to 150p. George Soros, the currency trader famed for breaking the Bank of England, has descended on the company.

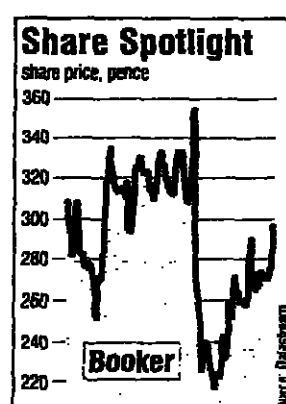
He intends to make Delancy his British vehicle and is pumping £100m into the property minnow. The deal also includes the acquisition of a property advisory company owned by the Ribbit family. The shares were 65.5p in November.

Metsec, an engineer, rose 30p to 255.5p on a 260p (£41.6m) Austrian offer.

TAKING STOCK

MALLET, one of London's oldest antique dealers, has a new and powerful investor. Lord Weinstock, creator of General Electric Co, has emerged as a 29.93 per cent shareholder. The stake was acquired from the Al-Fayeds' Harrold Holdings. But Lord Weinstock, 73, does not appear to be coming out of retirement. He regards the shareholding as a long term investment and he is well known to the company, started in Bath 130 years ago. Five years ago Mallet called off merger talks with Asprey, the jeweller. The antique dealer's shares welcomed the Weinstock arrival with a 20p gain to 122.5p, a high.

WIGGINS, the property developer which has caught the aviation bug, rose 2.25p to 14.5p after fixing up a new civil airline operation at Kent's Manston Airport which it acquired last year. The alliance is with Air Atlanta Icelandic operating 17 aircraft. The airline should land at Manston in July.



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George Soros: Already had links with the Ritblat family

Soros buys into UK property

By Lea Paterson

GEORGE SOROS, the man who made \$1bn when the pound fell out of the exchange rate mechanism, is buying into the UK property sector through a deal which also gives the billionaire investor a UK stock market vehicle.

The move is being seen as a thumbs up for the UK property market from Mr Soros, a speculator who inspires legions of copycat investors the world over.

Quantum Realty Fund, which is managed by Soros Fund Management, is to take a controlling shareholding in Delancey Estates, a hitherto little-known

property company. Shares in Delancey leapt by almost 50 per cent at the news to close at 150p, up 47.5p.

Although Quantum will provide financial backing for Delancey, management for the property company will be provided by Freehold Portfolios Estates (FPE), a property advisory company owned by James Ritblat, son of John Ritblat, the formidable chairman of British Land. Delancey is to buy FPE in a deal which could net Mr Ritblat Junior as much as £4m in Delancey stock.

James Ritblat will become managing director of the new Delancey Estates. Colin Wagman, Delancey's current chair-

man, is expected to step down once the deal is completed in early July.

Mr Wagman said: "These proposals will transform Delancey's profile and the opportunities available to the company."

Quantum Realty is investing £100.5m in Delancey, a sum which will give it a 66.7 per cent stake. Delancey plans to raise a further £28m via a share issue.

James Ritblat will have to cope with some interesting shareholder dynamics in his new role. His father currently holds 27 per cent of Delancey, although this stake will be diluted to just under 7 per cent once the Quantum deal goes through.

"It's a bit of a tricky proposition, isn't it," said Mr Ritblat of his father's stake in Delancey. "We'll just have to see how it goes."

The Quantum-Delancey-FPE deal cements years of co-operation between the Ritblat and Soros families. Quantum Realty and British Land embarked on a joint venture between 1992 and 1994, an initiative managed by James Ritblat.

The joint venture was brought to an end "amicably" in 1994 after Quantum decided to "reallocate its assets", according to one source. But James Ritblat evidently managed to impress the powers that be - his company FPE now

manages a property portfolio for the Soros family.

Mr Wagman said he initiated talks with Quantum, which was more than happy to invest in Delancey as long as it had the right management team.

Given Mr Soros's links with the Ritblat family, FPE seemed the natural place to turn for managerial input, Mr Wagman said.

James Ritblat will be joined on the Delancey board by Richard Katz, Quantum Realty's chairman, and Martin Edelman, real estate adviser to Soros Fund Management. The company is looking for another three non-executives.

Crisis worsens for Japan and HK

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

JAPAN yesterday unveiled its worst unemployment figures since World War II, as the yen slumped to a seven-year low against the dollar. Although the news cast a pall over Japanese markets it registered nothing like the shock of the Hong Kong government's revelation that the economy had slid into recession for the first time in 13 years.

In the first quarter of the year, Hong Kong's economic growth declined by 2 per cent in real terms, a drop far worse than expected by investors. The stock market was closed when the announcement was made and so did not respond but fears over the economy have caused a 6.5 per cent fall in share prices over the past week.

Sir Donald Tsang, the Financial Secretary, was forced finally to admit that his 3.5 per cent growth target for the year was unattainable. Describing the present situation as "an unprecedented economic upheaval", Sir Donald said he was no longer able to provide an economic forecast for the full year.

However, the consensus of most private sector forecasts is for flat, or at best marginal, economic growth, most of which is expected in the last quarter. A sharp decline in tourism and much reduced consumer and capital spending were cited as reasons for the economy edging into recession.

In Japan, where bad news has flowed freely for some time, the announcement of a 4.1 per cent unemployment level and the market's dispatch of the yen to an exchange rate of 139.23 against the US dollar, barely shook the stock market, where prices fell less than 1 per cent.

The steady fall of the yen has caused the Japanese currency to crash through successive barriers where support was expected. Intervention by the Bank of Japan to prop up the yen has proved ineffective in the past. US support may now come into play. Yesterday Thomas Foley, the US ambassador in Tokyo, said Washington was closely watching the rapidly rising US-Japan trade imbalance.

Legislators in Tokyo yesterday passed a package of measures to cut income taxes and boost public spending, primarily aimed at lifting domestic consumption off the floor.

Growth in exports at a halt

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE GROWTH in exports has stopped, official figures showed yesterday. The news followed a warning on Thursday from the Confederation of British Industry that new export orders had fallen to a 15-year low as a result of the strong pound.

Although the latest headline figures for the deficit in trade in goods showed an improvement, thanks in large part to oil and erratic items, the shortfall in the first quarter of this year was the biggest for nearly eight years.

The gap between the value of goods exports and imports in January-March was £3.2bn, up from £2bn in the final quarter of last year. March's deficit of £1.5bn was about £600m better than February's, partly reflecting unusually high aircraft exports.

The deficit with non-EU countries alone dipped to £715m in April from £1bn the previous month, again partly because of erratic items; but had risen to £3.4bn in the first quarter from just under £3bn. Exports to the most troubled Asian economies once again fell in April, and are running well below last year's levels.

Underlying export volumes fell by 0.4 per cent in the first quarter, compared to a 0.9 per cent drop in import volumes. The Office for National Statistics said trends in both were broadly flat.

Most City analysts are now gloomy about Britain's trade prospects despite the recent dip in the pound.

Kevin Darlington, an economist at ABN-Amro, said the painful cuts exporters have made in profit margins had not been enough to preserve market share. Export prices have fallen just 7 per cent in two years while the pound has climbed by more than 25 per cent.

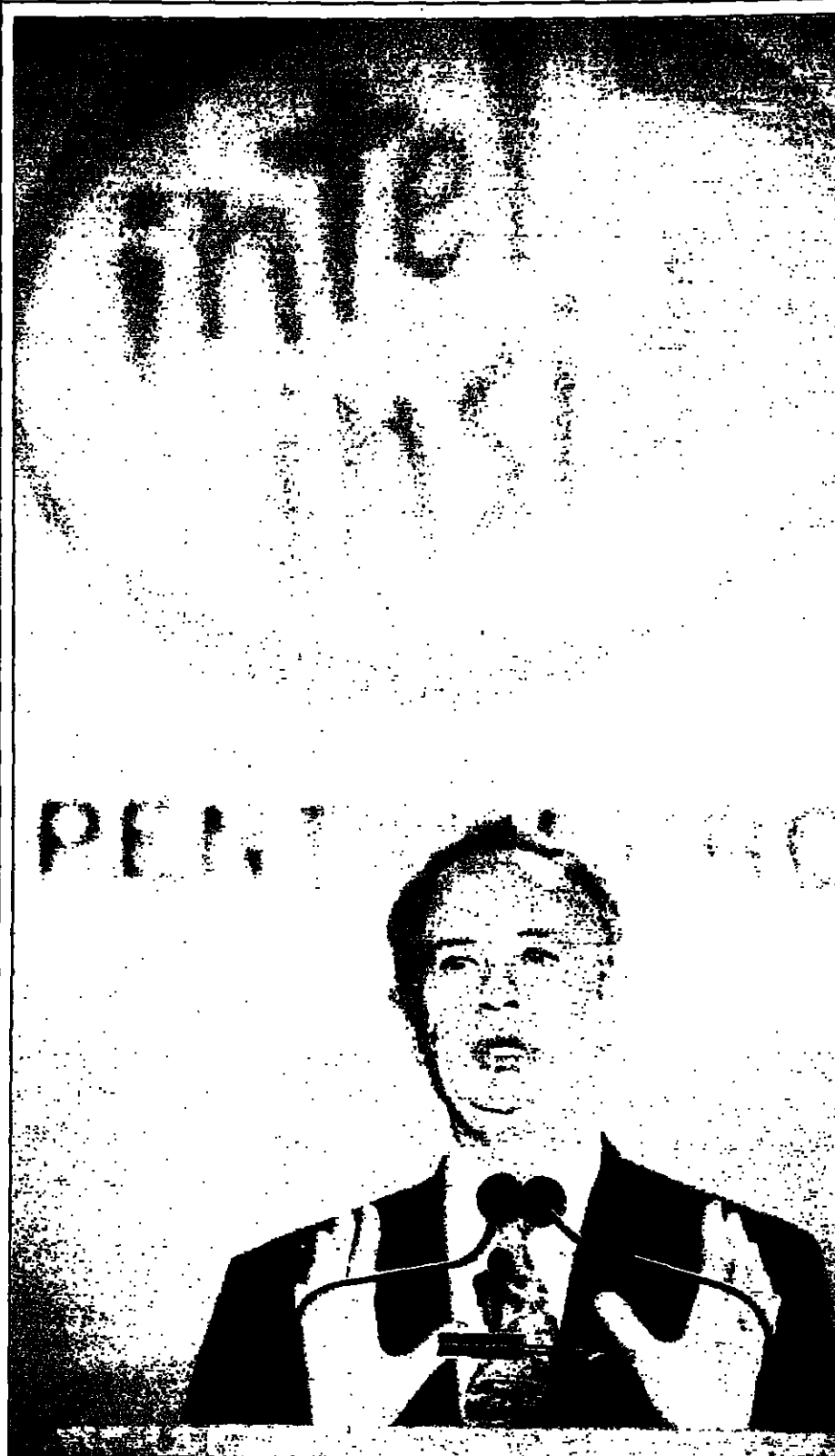
"Exporters are pricing themselves out of export markets and it comes as no surprise, therefore, to see a growing effect on trade volumes," he said.

Terry Cook, director of the North West Chambers of Commerce, said local manufacturers had cut their profit margins in a bid to keep market share.

"Those companies which have always competed on price are particularly vulnerable now. Those competing on quality have been able to continue that for some time, but their advantage is starting to be eroded too," he said.

Industrialists hope that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will once again vote against an increase in interest rates after its meeting next week. The pound has fallen more than 5 per cent in value from its peak in early April, but this welcome slide has come to a temporary halt.

Sterling ended nearly a penny higher at just under DM2.91 yesterday. Its index against a range of currencies was up 0.3 at 103.6.



Andrew S. Grove, chairman of Intel, whose processors control 80 per cent of PCs

Intel facing monopoly abuse charge

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

US competition authorities were yesterday preparing an anti-trust action against the chip-maker Intel. It is the second high-profile move against the companies which dominate global markets for high-technology equipment.

The Federal Trade Commission is likely to charge Intel with abusing its near-monopoly power in the microprocessor market, by refusing to share information about its products with competitors or with companies that they have a problem with, reports said. Intel makes the microprocessors that control more than 80 per cent of personal computers, producing the 286, 386 and 486 (the x86 series) and the Pentium processor. In particular, it has a near-monopoly of chips that will run Microsoft's Windows NT.

The move against Intel coincides with anti-trust suits against Microsoft, the dominant producer of software for personal computers, though it is not directly related. The suit against Microsoft is spearheaded by the Justice department and 20 US states; the FTC moves may reflect something of a turf war, with the FTC - a federal agency - intent on staking out its claim to the computer market against the Department of Justice, a government department.

Just last month, a judge in Alabama said that Intel had refused to share information with

the computer maker Intergraph, threatening its business. Intel is said to have carried out similar measures against computer maker Digital Equipment Corporation. It is also accused of having changed the design of its chips so that they will only fit certain sockets.

"This 'closed architecture' for practical purposes allows Intel, by exercising its intellectual property rights... to wield absolute power over who will and who will not be allowed in that part of the high-end computer industry that is based on the 'x86' architecture," ruled a US district judge.

The design change is seen as being aimed at its chief competitors, AMD and National Semiconductor, by encouraging computer makers to stick with one supplier.

Intel does not dispute that it limits information-sharing, but it claims that it is doing nothing illegal. The FTC's case is likely to rest on Intel's monopoly position, which, it will claim, puts its actions in a different category from other manufacturers. The FTC is still preparing its case, and it is possible that action could be headed off by a deal with Intel.

Lawyers and officials in Washington caution against seeing the Intel and Microsoft cases as evidence of a renewed appetite for "trust-busting". They say that both cases are unrelated, with the Microsoft case by far the more important. Even there, they say, it is hard to see a pattern developing of anti-trust actions.

UBS denies '\$700m loss' claim

By Lea Paterson

UBS yesterday issued a categorical denial of an article in *The Economist* which alleged that the Swiss bank incurred losses of up to \$700m (£425m) at its Singapore branch due to "poor risk control".

The Economist alleged that Lim Ho Kee, head of the Singapore branch, was allowed to run his office as a quasi-independent entity. As a result, James Loh, Mr Lim's right-hand man, was "not monitored by UBS's central risk-management department".

Mr Loh is alleged to have built up substantial positions in foreign exchange, interest rates and equities.

UBS insiders told *The In-*

dependent that Mr Lim was "a bit of a maverick" who, unlike most other regional heads, "was never seen in the London office".

It is not the first time the bank - which yesterday defended its risk management procedures - has faced allegations of lax credit control. Earlier this year, amid intense media speculation, the bank admitted it lost almost £300m on equity derivative and proprietary equity trading during 1997.

The bank's global equities derivatives (GED) group - again alleged to have been a "quasi-independent entity" - was at the root of these particular trading difficulties. The precise amount lost by the GED group has never been disclosed, although it has been vari-

ously estimated at between \$400m and \$700m.

In December, when UBS announced it was to merge with rival SBC, some commentators speculated that UBS's equity derivative losses allowed SBC to take the upper hand in the deal.

Both banks have denied the losses impacted upon the merger in any way, and Marcel Ospel, SBC's chief executive and chief executive-designate of the new bank, recently said he knew of the losses before the merger was announced.

"It would be interesting to know whether Mr Ospel was aware of the situation in Singapore too," remarked one UBS source.

In a statement yesterday,

UBS said it had "always been fully committed to high standards in all areas of its business, especially in its risk-management process". The bank went on: "UBS rejects this false reporting which seriously hurts its reputation. In addition, the report negatively affects the reputation of the bank's key professionals in Singapore and elsewhere."

The bank said its Singapore branch reported a profit after tax of \$529m (£111m) in 1997. It admitted that "as a consequence of the worsening environment in Asia in the first months of 1998, provisions for credit risks have been increased. However, the operating profit of the region continues to be satisfactory".

Yorkshire Water disappoints with dividend-limit 'gesture'

By Andrew Verity

YORKSHIRE Water yesterday produced a dividend payment which disappointed even the most pessimistic of shareholders, leading some to believe it was trying to make a political gesture.

The shares fell by 17 points to 461.5p, down 3 per cent, after it said it would only pay 20.35p per share. City analysts had expected at least 20.5p. Most had hoped for 21p or more.

Despite a fall in profits to £216m from £206m, the City was expecting a boost in dividend in line with other companies in the sector. Anglian Water boosted dividends by 13

per cent this week, while South West Water produced a 12 per cent dividend.

Kevin Bond, managing director, said the company was seeking to tighten its balance sheet. "We're very conscious of the fact that we're going to have a significant number of commitments in capital spend between 2000 and 2005," he said.

But the dividend was interpreted by some in the City as a political gesture towards Ian Byatt, director of Ofwat, the water regulator.

One analyst said: "They are trying to impress the regulator and there is no point in it. The regulator will do what he wants to do anyway. It is naive on their

part to think that the regulator will be affected."

Yorkshire Water has struggled to find favour with Ofwat since 1995, when one of the rainiest counties in the country found itself short of water.

The company was forced to invest in infrastructure and was hit by a penal pricing regime. Unlike rival companies, it cannot raise prices up to inflation plus 2.5 per cent, as the retail price index.

"It is definitely a political move. The trouble is, politicians don't understand dividends, they only understand prices and headline profits," said one City observer.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5870.70	8.40	0.14	6150.50	4382.80	3.68
FTSE 250	5901.40	2.90	0.05	5920.90	4384.20	2.94
FTSE 350	5944.50	3.80	0.13	5938.70	2141.80	3.52
FTSE All Share	2862.18	3.50	0.13	2861.12	2106.58	3.48
FTSE Chemicals	2773.10	3.50	0.13	2793.80	2182.10	2.93
FTSE Food & Drug	1508.40	4.10	0.27	1511.00	1225.20	3.00
FTSE Health	1133.50	-5.00	-0.44	1138.50	965.90	1.05
FTSE EURO 100	1091.84					
Dow Jones	8082.73	-13.70	-0.15	9261.91	6971.32	1.59
Nikkei	15670.78	-125.77	-0.80	20910.79	14484.21	0.96
Hong Kong	8924.56	56.82	0.64	16920.31	7906.13	4.59
Hang Seng	5569.08	87.32	1.56	5664.84	3467.24	2.76

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 months 1 yr 5 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.50 0.88 7.50 0.44 5.70 -1.51 5.85 -1.64	US 5.88 -0.13 5.88 -0.40 5.54 -1.20 5.79 -1.19	Japan 0.55 -0.04 0.58 -0.36 1.46 -1.37 2.05 -1.33
Germany 3.58 0.40 3.68 0.53 4.88 -1.04 5.43 -1.28		

CURRENCIES

S/E	D/M	M/E
at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
Dollar 1.6300 +0.025 1.6400	Swiss 1.4700 -0.10 1.4600	Yen 111.47 111.47 0.0094
DM 2.9175 +1.35 2.9285	Mark 1.7843 +0.44 1.7988	Yen 111.47 111.47 0.0094
Yen 226.50 +10.17 190.63	Yen 138.50 -4.40 116.22	Yen 111.47 111.47 0.0094
E Index 103.30 0.00 99.10	S Index 111.50 0.00 102.40	

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$) 2.5215	Malta (lira) 0.6182
Austria (schillings) 19.74	Mexican (nuevo peso) 12.77
Belgium (francs) 58.04	Netherlands (guilders) 3.1660
Canada (\$) 2.3047	New Zealand (\$) 2.9184
Cyprus (pounds) 0.8244	Norway (krone) 11.38
Denmark (krone) 10.77	Portugal (escudos) 285.56
Finland (markka) 8.6079	Saudi Arabia (riyal) 5.9241
France (francs) 9.4256	Singapore (\$) 2.5792
Germany (marks) 2.8208	Spain (pesetas) 238.40
Greece (drachma) 480.25	South Africa (rand) 8.1259
Hong Kong (\$) 12.21	Sweden (krona) 12.41
Ireland (pounds) 1.1128	Switzerland (francs) 2.5397
India (rupees) 62.20	Thailand (baht) 58.71
Israel (shekels) 5.4618	Turkey (lira) 401.455
Italy (lira) 2.783	USA (\$) 1.5881
Japan (yen) 221.12	
Malaysia (ringgits) 5.9399	

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thompson

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

هكذا من الأصل



MICHAEL HARRISON ON THE ETHICS OF DEALS IN JAKARTA AND THE PREDICAMENT OF THE MULTI-UTILITIES

All roads led to Suharto for Indonesian contracts

DISCREDITED regime awards Trafalgar House £385m toll road contract. The people rise up and discredited regime is removed from power. Question mark over future of toll road project. No, we are not talking about the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (although we just as easily could be). The above scenario actually relates, unsurprisingly, to Indonesia, where a consortium involving Trafalgar (now part of the Norwegian group Kvaerner) and a company controlled by former President Suharto's eldest daughter may forfeit the concession to build a 59km toll road in West Java.

As with many of the "UK firm set to lose Indonesian order" stories that are now emerging from Jakarta, the fog of war, or at least civil uprising, has served to cloud the picture. Trafalgar, for what it is worth, says it shelved the project nine months ago and declared "force majeure" after deciding that the road could not be financed if its costs were to be in dollars and revenues in the (plunging) local currency.

Indonesian officials, on the other hand, say they lost patience with Trafalgar, which was supposed to have built the first stage of the road by now, and are determined to re-issue the concession.

It is a similar picture of confusion in East Java, where PowerGen is said to be in danger of losing a £1bn contract to build

a coal-fired station. The governor of the region says the contract has been put under review. PowerGen says it is 80 per cent complete and remains on course to be commissioned ahead of schedule next year.

The discrepancies arise, in part, because no one in Indonesia knows for sure what is going to happen. After living under one-man rule for 33 years, local officials are testing out the parameters of their newfound powers for the first time. Meanwhile in Jakarta itself, an awful lot of post-Suharto rationalisation is going on. The government officers who now solemnly swear to withdraw any contracts that are tainted with nepotism or corruption are the same ones who awarded them in the first place.

Trafalgar and PowerGen are not alone. A large number of other UK companies, ranging from British Aerospace, Rolls-Royce and Thames Water to BP, Rio Tinto and United Biscuits, have interests in Indonesia. Does the purge now taking place there matter to them? And could they have done anything to avoid the situation in the first instance? The answer to the first is a qualified yes. The answer to the second is a qualified no.

The headline numbers sound big but the actual exposure of British companies is much smaller. For instance PowerGen's equity investment in the Paiton 2 power

station in East Java so far is a modest £37m since the project is 80 per cent debt-financed. Similarly, Trafalgar's direct financial liabilities are small, even though the revenues it would forgo if the concession is withdrawn would be more significant.

Thames' contract to provide water supplies for one half of Jakarta, now also suspended because of its Suharto links, could generate £225m in revenues over the next 25 years. But its maximum exposure is \$80m, not all of which has yet been invested.

In the case of both Thames and United Utilities, it is worth noting that business misjudgements have overtaken them far more than political misjudgements. Two years ago Thames wrote off £95m on ill-fated overseas expansion programmes while United Utilities has lost £90m in the sewers beneath Bangkok.

Could those companies that now risk losing their Indonesian contracts have avoided getting into this position? The short answer is no. As one British executive wearily explained, tendering for any large project in Jakarta automatically meant giving Suharto, or one of his extended family, a piece of the action.

Of course, corporate Britain could have pursued an ethical business policy, which might have led to it boycotting Indone-

sia. But where was the pressure for that? Certainly not from the Government, whose ethical arms policy is in some disarray and which has been strangely silent this week on this issue of our commercial links to Indonesia. That just leaves shareholder pressure but how often do ethics get in the way of good business?

Re-inventing the water company

THIS WILL come as a shock to most domestic gas, electricity, telephone and water customers but, whisper it softly, they may actually be getting a better deal out of the so-called "multi-utilities" than shareholders. This is the drift of a joint paper published yesterday by the various utility regulators. They have concluded not only that there are benefits to be had from being customers of these many-headed beasts but that further regulation to protect the consumer is unnecessary.

As if to reinforce the point, their report coincided with a fall in profits at Yorkshire Water and a lower-than-expected dividend payout. Proof, if it were needed, that Yorkshire is now doing to investors what it used to do routinely to its customers.

It is true that the multi-utilities - United Utilities, Hydror and Scottish Power - have underperformed the market. But fear not, they are fighting back on behalf of their shareholders. They have accepted the harsh fact that no matter how many different services can be crammed down one pipe, at the end of the day, the business will remain a boring old utility and will attract a stock market rating to match.

In an attempt to overcome this they are re-inventing themselves as go-go high-tech providers or simply trying to conceal their true identity. Thus United Utilities (North West Water and Norweb) is considering floating off its telecoms arm, which has invented a technique for linking customers to the Internet through the electricity socket. South West Water, meanwhile, has decided to rename itself Pennon Group.

The company used to be associated with the highest water charges in the land, contaminated supplies and dirty beaches. From now on it hopes to become as well known for being "a group of related environmental companies operating in the fields of waste management, environmental instrumentation and construction services".

The theory is that all utilities, not just the multi-utilities, are due for a re-rating. Hope springs eternal.

ING Barings chief quits after only five months

THE CHIEF executive of ING Barings, the investment banking arm of Dutch financial services group ING, quit yesterday after only five months in the job. The bank, which has been hit by recent high-level defections from its corporate finance department, said ING chairman Marinus Minderhoud would take over responsibility for the investment bank until a replacement was found for Arjun Mathrani, who joined from Chase Manhattan.

Banking sources said Mr Mathrani's departure was described in an internal staff memo from Mr Minderhoud as the result of Mr Mathrani's differing views on "certain management issues including matters relating to the organisation of our investment banking activities in Western Europe". The sources said the resignation underlined questions over the direction of ING's investment banking operation, whose future has been the subject of media speculation.

Fullers beer sales up 12%

FULLER, Smith & Turner, the brewing group, yesterday said beer sales had jumped by 12 per cent in the year to 28 March. After a disappointing start, beer sales rose to 153,000 barrels while sales of its leading London Pride brand jumped by 14 per cent. The company said it had been hit by poor weather in April but added "May was kinder to us". Profits rose by 7.9 per cent to £11.9m.

New mortgages double

BRITAIN'S banks have seen demand for new mortgages more than double in the last two months, according to figures from the British Bankers' Association. Net lending rose to £797m in April, up from £276m in February. While much of the increase was seasonal, the BBA said demand was now picking up. However, it said there was "an element of re-mortgaging churn in the housing market". Re-mortgages made up a quarter of all new loans.

Accounting's big name

THE ACCOUNTING giants Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand have said they would be called "PricewaterhouseCoopers" when they merge. The groups said in a statement yesterday that the new name would come into effect from the beginning of July. PW and Coopers were given final regulatory clearance for their merger by the European Commission on 20 May. The merged group will be the world's largest accounting and consulting firm.

Investment arm sold

THE 15th largest bank in America, BankBoston, yesterday announced that it had agreed to buy BankAmerica's investment banking arm, Robertson Stephens, for a total of \$800m. Robertson Stephens put itself on the block after BankAmerica agreed to merge with NationsBank earlier this year. BankBoston, which has been beefing up its underwriting and investment banking operations, said it would pay \$400m in cash, an additional \$300m over four years, and \$100m of stock options granted at market price. The deal's after-tax value currently is about \$550m, it said.

Fire costs Boots £30m

BOOTS will reveal next week that sales at its Boots the Chemists stores were affected by a serious fire at a key warehouse in the run-up to the Christmas trading period last year. The October fire near the group's head office in Nottingham, destroyed a warehouse the size of five football pitches, which was carrying 12,500 lines of stock. Boots is re-building the warehouse at a cost of £30m. This sum is insured but the disruption affected sales at Boots. Boots reports its full year results next Thursday and is expected to show pre-tax, pre-exceptional profits of around £550m up from £536m in the previous year.

More backs Clear deal

THE BOARD of the street advertising firm More Group said it was recommending its shareholders accept an offer to buy the company from Texas-based Clear Channel Communications Inc. Clear Channel said in the same statement that its offer of £11.10 per share will not be increased.

Company	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Water Works (F)	65.8m (91.7m)	15.2m (15.9m)	182.0p (142.0p)	57.0p (52.0p)
Fuller Smith & Turner (F)	114.2m (102.1m)	11.8m (11.0m)	38.4p (38.1p)	11.25p (10.5p)
Rolls Royce (F)	33.7m (27.6m)	1.38m (1.08m)	24.1p (19.7p)	8.0p (8.0p)
Woolworth Holdings (F)	5.1m (4.1m)	-0.09m (3.3m)	-0.01p (-0.85p)	nil
ICG (F)	28.3m (28.3m)	0.215m (0.571m)	1.39p (3.03p)	4.0p (4.0p)
Bank of Ireland (F)	4.2m (4.7m)	0.211m (0.228m)	4.1p (4.3p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Wise Group (F)	28.0m (47.2m)	-0.4m (1.3m)	-1.82p (7.48p)	2.25p (2.25p)
Waters Group (F)	2.3m (2.4m)	-0.457m (-0.478m)	-0.4p (-0.4p)	nil
Yorkshire Water (F)	658.4m (622.8m)	205.6m (215.8m)	11.4p (85.7p)	20.25p (18.5p)

(F) - Financial year ending March. EPS is pre-exceptional. *2 (pence) = 10 pence to 30 Nov 97

HSBC chairman bows out in style

SIR William Purves bowed out as chairman of HSBC yesterday with an upbeat trading statement, delivered to shareholders at the bank's annual general meeting.

"Performance in the first quarter of this year was in line with our plan, with some entities slightly ahead of expectations", Sir William said. However, the HSBC chief admitted that the Asian crisis could still damage the group's results.

"Fallout from the economic downturn in Asia continues to emerge," Sir William told shareholders.

Shares in HSBC, owner of Midland Bank, have taken a pounding in recent days in the face of renewed turbulence in the Asian region. Yesterday though, the bank's shares fared better, closing up 57p at 1,600p. HSBC is also listed in Hong Kong and does much of its business in Asia.

Sir William - who has been with HSBC for 44 years - said the bank had yet to see any of the provisions it had made against potential bad debts in Asia.



Sir William Purves (centre), the outgoing chairman who leaves after 44 years with HSBC

Brewin buys Wise for £24m

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

THE stockbroking group Brewin Dolphin yesterday completed its £24m purchase of Wise Speke, the private client broker, from the insurance agency Ockham Holdings.

Brewin Dolphin claimed the deal would make it the second-largest private client stockbroker in the country after Greig Middleton with

64,000 clients and £12bn under management. It said the acquisition would also strengthen its geographic coverage, particularly in the North of England. Wise Speke is based in Newcastle.

The deal is being financed by a placing and open offer of 4 for 13 shares at 368p, raising £24.5m net of expenses.

Brewin Dolphin forecast it should make a pre-tax profit of £5.75m in the six months to 26

June and said the acquisition would enhance its earnings per share in the first full year of ownership.

Brewin said it might make a deferred performance related allocation of shares with a value of up to £11m to Wise Speke's management.

Wise Speke has 19,000 client accounts and has £2.5bn under management. The business recorded a pre-tax profit of £3.4m last year including a

£1m exceptional gain from disposals. Net assets were £6.8m.

Ockham's strategy is to specialise in non-standard motor insurance in Britain. It will use the proceeds of the sale to fund further underwriting of its Highway motor insurance business.

Ockham said yesterday that it intends to pay an interim dividend of 1.6p for the six months to 30 June. Its shares closed 9p higher at 154.5p.

Anger as Unigate's Hillsdown deal fails

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

UNIGATE'S £1.6bn bid for Hillsdown Holdings collapsed in a welter of recriminations yesterday after the dairy group dramatically walked away from the deal at the last minute.

Unigate claimed it had withdrawn its offer after looking at additional information about Hillsdown's trading performance. "We were not able to support Hillsdown's views of its prospects," it said.

Hillsdown dismissed the claims, saying the information was not materially different from its trading statement to shareholders at its annual meeting earlier this month. It claimed Unigate had got cold feet after taking calls from institutional investors worried about the effects of the deal of the share price. It further hinted at a boardroom split at Unigate with the chairman, Ian Martin, keen on the deal but the chief executive, Sir Ross Buckland, cooler.

According to Hillsdown the talks were proceeding well late into the night at Lazzards, Unigate's financial advisers. The talks took place mainly between Sir John Nott and Michael Teacher from Hillsdown and Ian Martin and John Worby, Unigate's chairman and finance director respectively.

Sir Ross arrived later to take part in the talks for the first time. Hillsdown claims that though he appeared satisfied, the Unigate group suddenly broke off for a meeting in a separate room. After two hours they emerged at 1.30am to say the deal was off.

Hillsdown called Unigate's approach to the bid "stamboolic". A spokesman added: "This

is the fourth time since last August that Unigate has made an approach to Hillsdown. I don't think they will be coming back."

Unigate denied there was a split. "The board was united going into this and united coming out," it said. Unigate did not rule out coming back but indicated that it would be at a lot less than 217p per share.

Unigate's institutional investors were not unhappy about the deal's collapse. One said: "There was a degree of uncertainty as to whether this deal could stack up for Unigate at this price."

David Laing, analyst at Henderson Crosthwaite, said: "You felt there wasn't much value in it for Unigate shareholders at that price. Now Unigate has had a bit of a revolt from its shareholders and Hillsdown has to go back to the drawing board."

Investors were intrigued by the behaviour of Unigate's team. "Ian Martin comes from Grand Metropolitan so he has a deal-making background," one said. "But as chairman his job is to be running the board, not getting involved in things like this. It makes you wonder about his role."

Another said: "There is no shame in walking away from a deal if you don't think it is right."

Unigate's shares had lost almost 100p since news of the deal leaked. They bounced 28.5p to 665p yesterday, reflecting relief that it was dead.

Hillsdown shares fell 23.5p to 183p. The company will now press ahead with its break-up plan that will see shareholders receive shares in three separate quoted companies. The chilled foods and house-building divisions will be floated off while the furniture business will be sold.

Virgin float depends on track upgrade ruling

VIRGIN RAIL expects to decide on a floatation within weeks, it said yesterday - as soon as the rail regulator clears its plans for upgrading the West Coast Main Line.

The planned upgrade of the tracks, signalling and rolling stock, which will cost billions of pounds, is being examined by the regulator.

Richard Branson, owner of Virgin Group which owns 41 per cent of Virgin Rail, said: "The sign-off of the upgrade has to be done before any announcement. We have to sign-off the deals and they have to be in place first. A few ticks are needed and then we are ready to go."

One company source later

added that the rail regulator could make a final decision on the rail upgrade "within a few weeks".

That will free Virgin to make its float decision, but it refused to elaborate. The market expected a float in June, but this timetable is now certain to slip to later in the summer.

If Virgin goes ahead with the float, industry sources indicated it could be worth £250m.

Other shareholders in Virgin rail include JP Morgan and Bankers Trust. Virgin refused to comment on whether it was considering a retail offering, but it said it was confident it could secure backing if the float went ahead.

Charity hospitals to sue over PPP chief's remarks on safety

By Andrew Varty

CHARITY hospitals are set to bring a libel action against PPP, Britain's second largest health insurer, over what they claim are defamatory comments made by its chief executive.

The Federation of Charity Hospitals yesterday said it was consulting its lawyers over remarks by Peter Owen, chief executive of PPP, that allegedly implied some of its members' hospitals were unsafe.

Mr Owen was asked by a policyholder at PPP's AGM to say how he decided which hos-

pitals would be ditched from its list of care providers.

Mr Owen replied: "There is a very rigorous process that is gone through with all of the hospitals in all the areas where we ascertain the levels of safety at the hospital and the range of services they can provide, and it is on that basis that we make the choice."

The federation, which represents 65 per cent of hospitals in the charity sector, said the implication of the remarks was that member hospitals which had been de-listed by PPP were unsafe.

Gerald Pilkington, chief ex-

ecutive of the federation, said: "This is a shocking statement and was made to a subscribers' meeting where the public were present. We have no doubt this is defamatory about our members and we will take whatever steps are necessary."

In the last two years, tension has risen between private medical insurers and the hospitals they use. The insurers are desperate to cut costs in order to contain a rise in premiums of 3.5 per cent a year above inflation.

Insurers such as PPP have introduced "network initiatives". Under these schemes,

the insurer will only cover treatment at a specially selected network of private hospitals. Excluded hospitals face the prospect of losing a large chunk of their annual income.

John Neville, a spokesman for PPP, declined to comment on the threat of a libel action. But he said the network initiatives were merely introducing market discipline to private hospitals.

"Our initiatives address the serious over-capacity of private hospitals which means the charges are unacceptably high because they are subsidising unoccupied beds," he said.

Where heaven and earth collide

**Paul Vallely's
BRITAIN**



Iona: As the tiny Scottish island celebrates another hallowed date in its sacred calendar, is it at risk of becoming a spiritual theme park for middle-class seekers of sanctuary?

EFFORT is the missing co-efficient in most equations about modern travelling. A few weeks ago, I overheard a chap in a travel agent booking a last-minute holiday. The options set out before him were Crete, Minorca or the Amalfi coast. They were three very different countries and yet the holiday offered in each was essentially the same package.

More than that, the journey to each – Gatwick, a two-hour flight, a 40-minute drive to the apartment allocated on arrival – was identical. I thought of him last week as I travelled to the Hebridean island of Iona. The journey there – involving two trains, a ferry, a bus, another ferry, with the last stage on foot – was, by contrast, a defining process in itself.

I had boarded the sleeper amid Euston's metropolitan midnight bustle and woken in Scotland. Over breakfast, the human geography of the Clyde slipped by the window, with its factories, houses, and high-rises set out across the estuary.

Next, the train rocked through woods in which dusty carpets of bluebells lay between the birches. It halted at small stations with long names, which required no pronunciation since no one alighted and few climbed aboard.

The ferry crossing from Oban, and then the bus across the wide moorlands of Mull served only to heighten the gradual sense of estrangement from the world of the everyday. So that by the time the boat lurched across the swift-running tides of the

Sound of Iona, I was receptive to the idea that I was arriving at a place on the edge – a place where, as George MacLeod put it, the veil between heaven and earth was particularly thin.

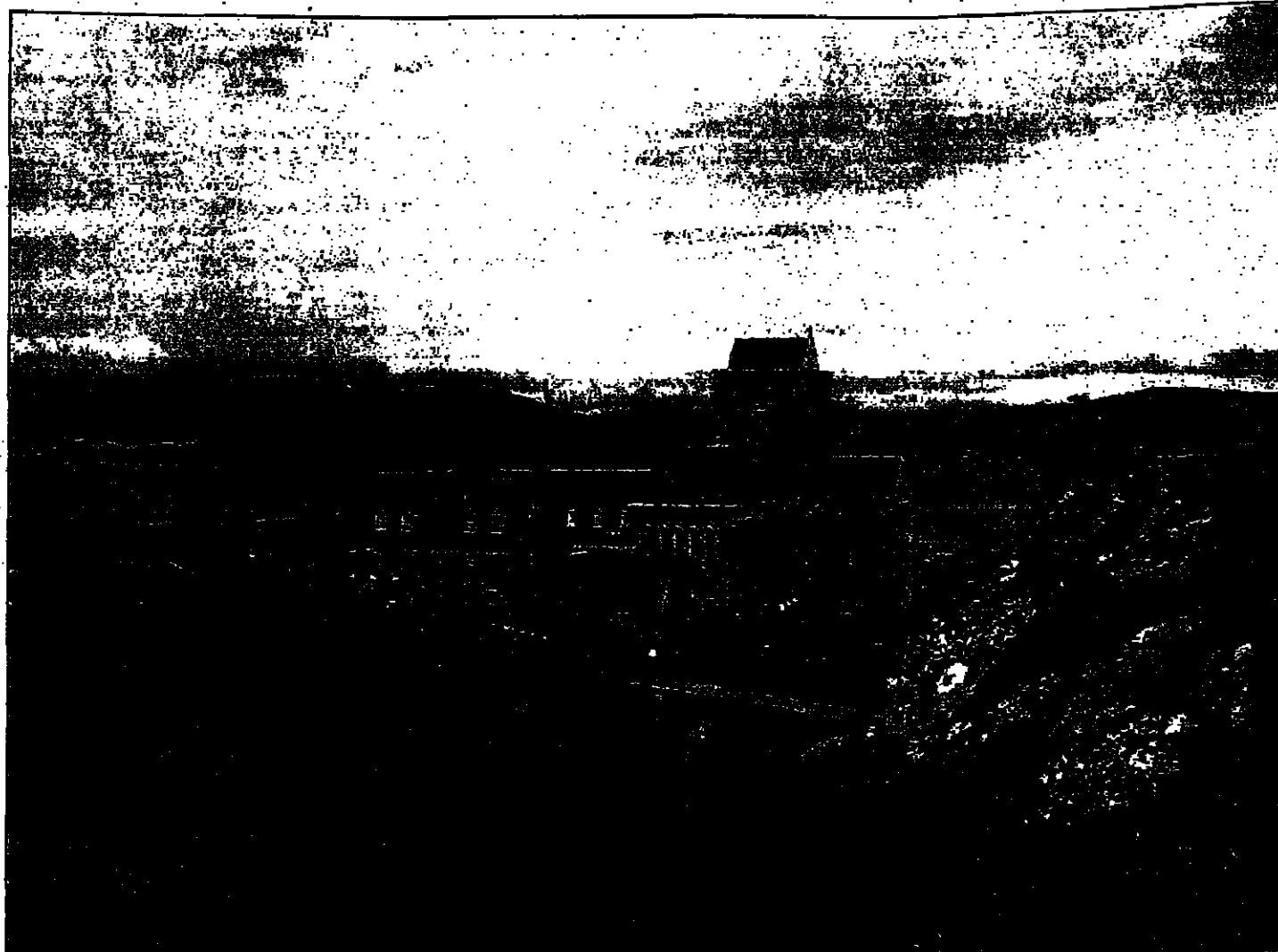
George MacLeod, or Lord MacLeod of Fuinary as he later became, was the man who in 1938 founded the Iona Community, which next week celebrates its 60th anniversary. It was not, of course, this which gave the place its reputation as one of the most sacred places in the British Isles.

That began in 563AD when a princely Irish monk named Columba landed on Iona and founded the monastery from which Christianity spread throughout Britain long before Augustine made serious inroads out of Canterbury.

In the intervening centuries, the windswept island has been hallowed by the burial of the medieval kings of Norway, Ireland and Scotland. Then, in the 12th century, Reginald, Lord of the Isles, invited the Benedictines to establish the abbey whose strong walls gave refuge to the poor and the broken for centuries.

It was their ruined buildings, which MacLeod and his fellows rebuilt as a place of quiet in which to reinvigorate themselves for the struggles of life in inner-city Glasgow.

Today, there is a deep irony about this tiny island, barely three miles long, with untamed moorland around which its population of 92 work at their crafts. For, this sanctuary at the end of the long journey



About a quarter of a million people visited Iona Abbey (above) last year. Tourism is taking its toll

Photograph: Hamish Campbell

into silence now receives visitors in huge numbers, who by their very presence jeopardise what it is they have come to seek. Most days outside winter, the road between the only jetty and the abbey is packed with a steady stream of day-trippers.

Last year, 200,000 people visited it, either for the 1400th anniversary of St Columba's death or to see the grave of John Smith, the former Labour leader who lies buried only feet from the spot where Macbeth and Duncan are said to be interred.

The flow of visitors was such that his widow recently agreed to the swivelling of the massive granite stone – which bears Burns's words: "an honest man's the noblest work of God" – because the graves of recently buried local people were being badly trampled by visitors trying to read the epitaph.

"We don't really understand what brings them all," said the Abbey's warden, Peter Millar, a Church of Scotland minister. "Is it the search for roots, expressed in the sacred? Is it a revolt against the ease and comfort of modern life? We know so many people don't want to live destructively and yet feel trapped within a system which gives them little choices beyond 12 kinds of breakfast cereal at Sainsbury's."

"Yet you'd be amazed at the number of people who get off that ferry and say: 'I feel, at last, I am at home.' What on earth do they mean? Many of them aren't even Scottish! You see people actually hugging the stones."

It even affects many who do not come. "They write a letter just addressed to Iona Abbey, Scotland," he added, "filled with all the pain of their lives and just expect that someone will open it and somehow deal with it. 'So, why are people flooding to Iona at a time when the mainstream churches are experiencing a crisis of decline?'"

Cynics dismiss it as merely spiritual tourism for the middle-class seeker after personal fulfilment. And, certainly, there is a lot of romantic tosh talked and written about the vogue for Celtic spirituality. But the world of Columba did seem to embody an attitude to life whose loss the modern world is beginning to lament.

It was a religion of myth and poetry rather than theology. Its vision was communal rather than hierarchical. It believed in the wholeness and goodness of the world, in contrast to the idea that the world of matter was something to be rejected in preference to the spiritual. All of which chimes in with the ecological concerns of today and our growing sense that science and rationalism cannot provide all the answers.

Above all, the boundary between the sacred and the secular was dissolved – something George MacLeod re-learned six decades back. In Govan, in the depressed 1930s, he concluded that priests would never understand their parishioners until their way of training was changed.

Abbey began when he brought together a team of half a dozen unemployed craftsmen and six trainee ministers whom he forced to act as labourers to the workers. It was a modern attempt to recreate the Columban unity of worship and work, church and industry, spiritual and material.

You can, however, go too far in connecting God with Mammon. As did the pilgrim who arrived last month in this place of penitence and humility in that ultimate symbol of privilege and power, a helicopter.

"If it was an hour from Birmingham probably no one would come," said Peter Millar, whose speech patterns are as wild as his hair. "The Celtic world was charged with energy but it was a hard world. Yet, the poor of Glasgow can't even afford the train fare here. And we're not here to provide a spirituality to make people more comfortable in Knightsbridge."

But the greatest irony of Iona is that when the visitors arrive at the Abbey to stay as week-long guests, they discover that the Iona Community does not live there at all. It is not a monastic community but rather a dispersed one.

Its 220 members and 1,600 associates are bound together by a five-fold rule of daily prayer and mutual accountability on how they spend their time and income. But they live throughout Britain, and throughout the world, working largely in disadvantaged inner-city communities, visiting Iona only for retreats. Only a few live in the abbey to head a staff of long-term volunteers who maintain the rhythm of prayer and work in which the visitors join.

"The challenge," said the community's leader, Norman Shanks, pondering the 60th anniversary, "is to respond to the expansion [in numbers] without losing integrity." To avoid the danger of Iona becoming a theme park of privatised, middle-class spirituality, the community must cling to MacLeod's vision that it will only succeed if it energises its visitors to go back to the everyday world to bring about change.

"Iona needs to become more prophetic and more radical," according to Millar. And that, of course, may put the helicopters off altogether. Or make their occupants come the hard way. And linger longer.

SOMETIMES
IT'S EASIER
TO TALK
TO SOMEONE
YOU
DON'T LIKE.



When you have a problem, it's the most natural thing in the world to want to talk it through with someone.

Sometimes, though, this creates another problem: who's the best person to confide in?

An obvious choice would be a close friend. But let's face it, we don't always choose our friends for their amazing powers of tact, diplomacy and discretion. Tell one person, and you may end up telling the world.

You may be lucky enough to be able to talk to someone in your family. Then again, you may be one of the large number of people who find talking to your nearest and dearest agonisingly embarrassing.

A girlfriend or boyfriend? If you can, great. But sometimes we don't want to expose our weaknesses to those who fancy us.

And sometimes your relationship is

the very problem you want to discuss.

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Call now. You'll find we're remarkably easy to talk to.

The Samaritans

TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



A baby in the freezer ...

Can science stop the biological clock?

Plus

■ Revealed – the woman who is Bridget Jones

■ The Hodd Squad – football correspondent Ian Ridley picks his final 22 for the World Cup

■ Rediscovered – the first ever photographs of the summit of Mount Everest

كلنا من الأصل



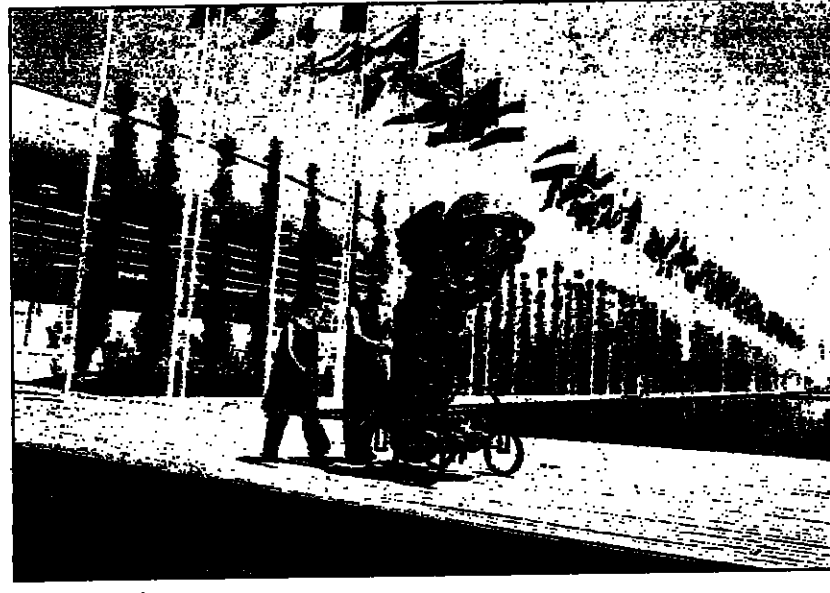
TIME OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 30 May 1998



PICTURES OF THE WEEK Scenes from Expo 1998. The last world exhibition of this century is taking place in Lisbon and will run until 30 September. It celebrates the UN's Year of Oceans and coincides with the 500th anniversary of Vasco da Gama's arrival in India. Highlights of the massive show include an enormous aquarium in the form of a boat, a virtual-reality dive and the recreation of exotic, 15th-century gardens. Photographs by Rui Xavier. To order a print of this picture (12x9in) call 0171-293 2534



TRAVEL

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Gdansk: Poland's city of nostalgia 6
Dream islands of Croatia 7

LEISURE

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Unlocking London's secret squares 13
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SPORT

Having a ball: Monica Seles on the new court camaraderie among the girls who hang out on Centre Court. 23

Hit man: Colin Calderwood, the Scotland defender, a novel way of life. The World Cup: adrenalising. 27

“In search of a brave new world, they found a great new recipe for chicken.”

CAJUN COUNTRY. There's more to Cajun history than Shrimp Gumbo and accordion. Pete McCarthy investigates one of the more shameful episodes in Britain's history and how modern-day Acadians and Cajuns are still coming to terms with it. Sunday afternoons from 31 May 12.04 - 12.30.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95 FM & 198 LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

The original trance-dance



Hide and seek in an Essaouiran street

Photograph: Magnum

After a long, dusty drive from concrete Agadir, Essaouira appears in the distance like a shimmering citadel. Hippies, tourists, surfers, refugees and loners have long found sanctuary in this southern Moroccan town, far from the hassle of the northern cities. Even before its heyday as a trading port in the 18th century, sub-Saharan Africans shipped up here, seeking the produce of Europe in exchange for gold, salt, ostrich feathers – and slaves, who brought their own and only precious commodity, *Gnaoua*.

Like the blues, the music of *Gnaoua* evolved from rhythms beat out to ease the suffering of the soul. It is still chiefly concerned with the healing of spiritual wounds, using trance, prayer, possession, exorcism and dervish-like dancing, with music made from instruments unique to the tradition: the *guembri*, a long-necked three cord lute, the *qraqeb*, metal castanets, and *ganga* drums.

Gnaoua took root in this area of Morocco, and its rituals call on pagan deities or *mlouk*, as well as honouring Islamic saints, claiming spiritual descent from Sidna Bilal, Mohammed's son-in-law, who became the Prophet's first *muezzin*.

With the rise of World Music, *Gnaoua* is fast gaining recognition outside Africa, and this year Essaouira is hosting the first ever international festival of *Gnaoua*, billed as the original trance-dance music.

The three-day festival will take place on 5, 6 and 7 June, with six concerts planned. Five of the most famous *Gnaoua* groups will be in action, including

This week, a spiritual blues festival begins at Essaouira in southern Morocco. By Lulu Norman

Amida Boussou, Abdesslam Allikane, and Mahmoud Guinea (who played with Santana in Casablanca), Bakboh from Marrakesh and Hassan Hakmoun, signed to Reelworld. Also playing will be Berber musicians called *Ganga*, allied to *Gnaoua*. These musicians are not only masters of their art, but seen as givers of brotherhood and doctors of body and soul. The festival will also include a conference on the culture of *Gnaoua*, and the highlight will be the sacred night of the *lila* or *derdeba*.

The *lila* is a night of ritual possession and divination. Amid prayer and incantation, ritual dance and handclapping, 40 or so spirits and ancestors are invoked, roughly corresponding to categories of human sensibilities. Next come the fumigations, the sprinkling with rose and orange blossom water and the musicians play the *guembri*, always sensitive to the audience and reactions of those in trance.

Yet this is not just a matter of a medieval Christian-style exorcism, expelling evil spirits from those placed in a trance, but also of inviting possession: the *genies* dance in their bodies as a healing power, to the music played by the *Gnaoua* musicians. At dawn, breakfast is taken and the company returns to the secular world.

The trances are quite something to behold, from trembling to raving to epileptic-type fits. But clairvoyants and healers are on hand to avert accidents. Unlike Arab society at large, women are not excluded or secondary but central to the proceedings; the master of the sanctuary can be a woman – as are many of the spirits invoked, and the clairvoyants are usually women, chosen either by hereditary gift or a revelatory illness; sickness is seen as a sign you have been chosen by a spirit. The devotees and the trances are often predominantly female.

Stories abound of Lazarus-like healings, of physical and mental disturbance cured. A Dutch professor who had been paralysed for 30 years was found to have nine devils in residence. The healer brought out the oldest devil, reading from the Koran, the other devils having died long ago, and the professor walked.

Jane Loveless, the festival's organiser, witnessed a healer heating metal in a saucepan, which was then held over the head of an 80-year-old woman who had suffered a paralysing stroke. Water was poured over the metal, the healer then read the forms of the newly solidified metal to the sound of incantations. The woman began to recover immediately and

within three weeks had regained total use of her limbs and senses.

All events at the *Gnaoua* festival are free, though the official *lila* is by invitation only. However, there's every chance of spontaneous *lilas* breaking out all over town in response to demand. Celebrations have a way of spilling out over the streets, and many events are programmed around town to coincide with the festival, with music, exhibitions and films pertaining to *Gnaoua*.

Essaouira is a small town that has prospered greatly in the last 10 years and has become a welcoming haven for all, with an easy rhythm of life. European and Berber cafes, fantastic spice markets, good hotels at all prices and various illicit drinking holes. Around the harbour fishermen shake flailing octopus and fresh fish to tempt passers-by, before grilling them for all to eat at trestle tables: behind them the great orange hulls of ships-to-be lie stranded on the port, and beyond that the beach extends as far as the eye can see.

The best airport with regular flights from Britain is Marrakesh, served by British Airways (0345 222111) from Gatwick and Royal Air Maroc (0171-439 4361) from Heathrow via Casablanca. For travel out on 4 June and back on 11 June, Hamilton Travel (0171-344 3344) has a fare of £259 on RAM. From Marrakesh, it's about four hours by bus to Essaouira, for £3. For details of the festival contact Jane Loveless on 00 212 4 47 63 47.

SIMON CALDER



"Same company, different place, virtually identical experience." Chris Lewis, of London, writes that my experience at an Alamo car rental counter in Florida was far from unique. At Newark airport, New Jersey, he came under the same pressure to upgrade to a more expensive model.

"The man behind the counter started telling me that the economy car I'd booked and paid for lacked 'safety features' (unspecified) and, far worse, a radio. 'For only an extra \$20 a day...'

"I conferred with the better half – 'save the money', she said, 'and stick with the small car'.

"We walked out to the allotted parking space and thought we'd made a mistake. I'm no expert on American cars, but this one was huge, with power everything – and a radio. There didn't seem to be any small cars in the parking compound. (Incidentally, the car parking area at Newark is a pig to find and we ended up missing our flight home, but that's another story.)"

Victor Carlton, of Bristol, says anyone who books the cheapest model of car is actually in a strong bargaining position. "The clerk who gave you a Suzuki Esteem was trying to pull a fast one. As soon as he saw your documents specifying a sub-compact, he knew he had a problem with none in stock. He should have immediately offered an upgrade at no extra cost, the choice of vehicle to be agreed.

"I always specify a sub-compact and have been offered any car on the rental lot: 'Hey, how about a Pontiac Firebird?' Providing the car has been pre-ordered and paid for, they have no choice. In your case he should have asked if you minded having a Suzuki Esteem as an alternative and, if you had a genuine objection, would have had to offer a second choice."

The rule, says Mr Carlton, is always to order a sub-compact. "You will almost always get an upgrade and, if not, who needs a big car?"

Jonathan Posner writes from Niccone in Umbria to say he habitually books an A-class car for city driving. "On my last trip to San Francisco this had an unexpectedly pleasant, although guilt-ridden (for about 15 seconds) benefit. Like yourself, I had ordered a Fiesta-sized car. What did I receive? Yes, a V8 Ford Mustang in a rather fetching red".

Peter May e-mails from the sunny side of cyberspace to say he has "long worked on the principle that car rental companies at airports never have the cheapest car in stock. I always pre-order an A-class car and only once have I actually driven away in one.

"The agent usually says something like, 'Well, Mr May, we only have a ***** available' I look blank because I know nothing, and care even less, about cars, so I have no idea what a ***** is. They explain it is bigger than I ordered. I think of extra fuel and more difficulty driving and parking. But they regard it as something I should be pleased about. I have never – never – been asked to pay more. You pay the rate for the car group ordered: if they can't supply it, they give the next group up at no extra charge. I have noticed that the shorter the rent the bigger the car you get.

"By the way, I find the web sites of the major car rental firms very useful for comparing rates, and usually the weekly rate is worth using even if the rental is less than a week. And if you decide to stay at a hotel near the airport on the night you arrive, you can save a lot by picking up the car at a location outside the airport zone."

Mr Carlton suggests saving the same cash by being economical with the truth to avoid airport tax on the rental. "It is a tax the airport charges for the privilege of being allowed to shuttle passengers to and from the airport. If you don't use the shuttle you don't pay the tax. They don't know whether you've come in on the shuttle or whether someone gave you a lift. Tell a white lie and save \$15."

Finally, to avoid being befuddled by strange cars, says Mr Carlton, "make a checklist of the things you want to know about the car, and ask for someone to come and show you all the items. I once had great difficulty finding the release catch for the gas tanks. The depot didn't know; they had to ring someone. It turned out to be concealed inside the glove compartment."

A train

Last weekend's rail bargain – anywhere on Thameslink for £1 – led to thousands of travellers being stranded in Brighton when the trains couldn't take the strain of all the travellers. This week's is excellent value, too, but with luck supply will meet demand.

From Monday, Great North Eastern Railway (0345 225225) is offering up to 440 miles of rail travel for £12. The After Eight ticket allows unlimited travel on its network between 8.01pm and 3.30am any evening from Monday to Friday. This is enough time for the long haul from Motherwell via Edinburgh, Newcastle and York to London King's Cross – normally £72 one-way.

You must book the ticket by 4pm the day before travel. The offer is valid until 21 August.



A boat

Book a boat trip across the Irish Sea by close of business today (4pm), for travel before 16 July, and you get a second ticket for travel in the autumn or next spring. Irish Ferries (0990 171717) is offering the deal on its car ferries on the Holyhead-Dublin and Pembroke-Rosslare routes. A car plus up to five adults travelling to the Irish capital costs £119 for up to five days. The free ticket can't be used over Christmas or New Year.

A plane

Staying in Ireland, you don't see as many old flyushins at Shannon airport as you used to; a combination of longer-range aircraft and the collapse of the Soviet Union means it is no longer a big refuelling base for Aeroflot. The slots are filled by new flights from Birmingham and London Stansted, operated by AB Airlines (0800 45 88 111). These use British aircraft, not Russian.

A room

Check In rarely makes use of press releases, preferring to dig around to bring you original travel news. But one piece of propaganda caught our eye this week. Something Special Holidays (01992 557711) is offering a week in a chateau in Bergerac in June (during the France '98 World Cup) "for under £22".

The calculation is based on 28 people sharing the Chateau Loutardie. They had better be close friends, since the release points out "the price includes a ferry or shuttle crossing for one car".

That's 28 people, one car.

A meal

When *The Travel Show* begins its new series on Monday (8.30pm BBC2), Juliet Morris dines on seafood in Madagascar, then sees the amazing dancing lemurs on the fourth-largest island on earth.

A drink

Copenhagen, the home of Tuborg and Carlsberg, is the next target of City to City, the regular short-break spot in Wednesday's issue of the *Independent Eye*. Cathy Packe prescribes how to get the most out of a £250 escape to the Danish capital.

A week from now...

... Copenhagen gets more accessible, when Britain's newest airline gains its third destination. On 5 June, Go (0845 60 54321) starts flying from Stansted to the Danish capital. The lead-in fare on British Airways' no-frills offshoot is £100, but a "wider range of fares" will be announced at 9am on Monday next week.

A month from now...

... pay a visit to the Birmingham International Jazz Festival, between 29 June and 12 July, at venues all over the city. Festival hotline: 0121-454 7020

A year from now...

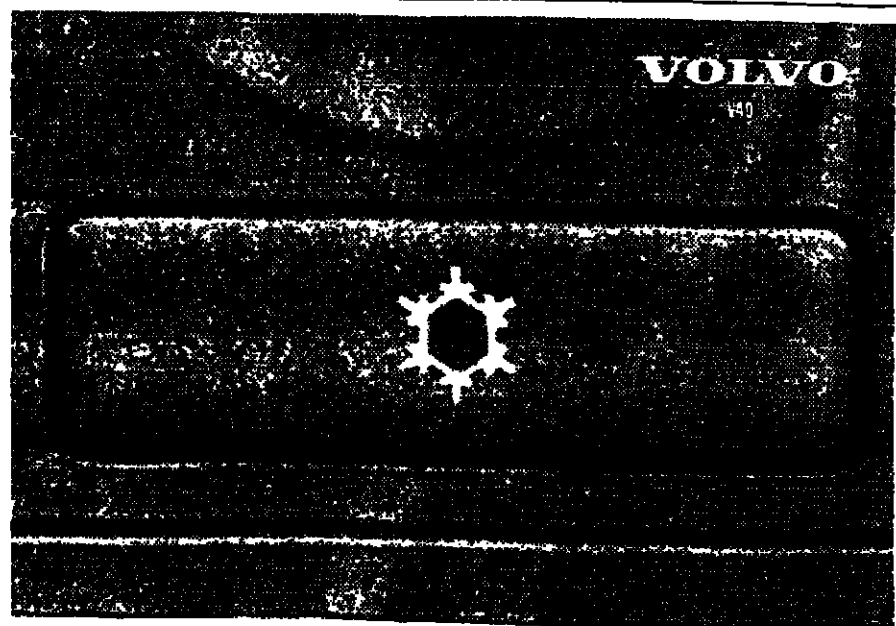
... meet Anglophiles from around the world at Scarborough Fayre, a festival of traditional English songs, dances and folk performances, from 28 May to 6 June.

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هكذا من الأصل

What happens to a tourist resort when troubles miles away cause customers to leave abruptly? Last week Mark Elliott found himself almost alone on the enchanted island of Bali

Nearly a decade ago I met an American couple holidaying, unexcitedly enough, on the Isle of Wight. They liked it well enough, but abruptly went home when the poll tax riots broke out in London. "But that's a hundred miles away," I exclaimed, suppressing a mocking chuckle. Their B&B was less amused at their departure.

Being in Bali this month was a distinct case of déjà vu.

As fireworks started fizzing in Jakarta's political tinderbox, phone offices and e-mail lounges were full of travellers reassuring friends and families. But as newspapers bubbled with awful news of riots, shootings, casualties and embassy airlifts from Jakarta, the hotels began to empty. "But Jakarta's more than 500 miles away," I noted. Notwithstanding, tourist numbers slowly but perceptibly started to decline, ignoring their own observations of Bali's obvious calm. Thousands of newcomers failed to arrive as tour groups cancelled.

The Balinese, said to have a smile for every emotion, found one of their more ironic grins as they watched their business dwindle. "This is Bali. No trouble here," every local reminded us with gentle urgency. Throughout the riots elsewhere, the most newsworthy event in Bali was the Kuta Beach opening of the world's first Hard Rock Hotel. The giant guitar and amp standing sentry at its foyer door had no mobs to deter.

Those who retreated should turn around: Bali genuinely is the island of the gods. While the populous west of Indonesia turned to Islam centuries ago, the Balinese still revere the Hindu manifestations brought to the archipelago in the 5th century by Indian traders. Gods here are rather playful and need daily appeasing to avert such obvious disasters as the eruptions of the volcanoes which form the island's very fabric.

Every day, homes, businesses and even the most tawdry tourist hotels deck their shrines, steps and swimming pool edges with dozens of attractive offerings – small handfuls of flowers, along with freshly boiled rice and burning incense in little hand-woven leaf baskets. In Bali there are more shrines than homes. Each village has at least three temples, and since so many flowers are required for devotional offerings, almost every home is set amidst drooping fronds of orange and violet bougainvillea, scarlet hibiscus, spiky frangipani trees and palms sprouting parasitic orchids.

Even the most "ordinary" Ba-



On the terraces – view over Balinese rice fields

Photographs: Frank Spooner Pictures

Island of the gods



linese villages shine with a photogenic tapestry of colours and a timeless Indiana Jones film-set quality. Add the volcano peaked horizon and dramatic rice terraces, and it's not surprising that the island is a long term haunt of artists and travellers. What is more surprising is the obliging way

in which most of the package tourists seem to stick to the prescribed day trips from the unappealing beach hubs of Kuta, Nusa Dua or Sanur. At least that was while there still were tourists.

In Ubud, the island's artist colony and cultural showcase, the nightly *legong* dances continued in the royal palace courtyard, *wayang kulit* shadow puppets still strutted before oil lamps and as ever the flower strewn village was peacefully sleeping by 10pm. The only sign of trouble on the whole island came on 20 May. The day before President Suharto's resignation, the proposed national day of demonstration (called off at the last minute) did result in a vague sense of tension in the bigger Balinese towns (Denpasar, Singaraja). Hundreds of troops and police guarded businesses and posed smiling for our photos. Dozens of townfolk looked on, bemused. For tourists, the only inconvenience was the lack of transport – buses and minivans stayed off the streets and ferry services to Java were

interrupted to prevent Javanese agents provocateurs coming to stir up trouble.

Nothing else happened. Everyone went home early and the restaurants extended their happy hours in the evening. This was not so much in celebration as to lunge for the dwindling group of remaining foreign customers.

Even if the tourist numbers do make a miraculous recovery, Indonesia is likely to remain a bargain for at least a few months if not years. In 1997, the Indonesian currency, the rupiah, traded at around 4000 to the pound. Now £1 is over 16,000.

Meanwhile the price rises that have caused widespread hardship for the locals have come nowhere near a comparable four fold increase. The result is that for tourists, everything seems shamefully cheap. But if travellers feel guilty about profiting from the misfortunes of others, they should remember that much of the Balinese economy is built on tourism.

Even without bargaining, £1

was enough to charter an outrigger canoe, rent mask/fins etc and pay a two-man crew to drive me out on a snorkelling trip from the ghostly quiet minor resort of Candi Dasa. Another pound paid for a sunrise cruise to see the dolphins at Lovina – breakfast thrown in – with money back if the dolphins didn't show up (they did). Accommodation in the £1-2 range includes quite passable double rooms with fan, attached bathroom and the obligatory fresh fruit, coffee and toast breakfast. For £5-£7/double the beds get bigger, the bathrooms have hot water and there's a fair chance of air conditioning and/or swimming pool.

All prices are negotiable. And far from adding tax and the usual summer high season supplements to your bill, hotels are presently offering discounts to make up for dwindling numbers.

Bali may be the island of the gods, but its public transport system sold its soul to the devil. Departures are regular in the

mornings and fares are cheap, but even medium sized towns tend to have more than one bus station, and vehicles can get pretty full, especially when a goat or two get on board with their masters. Travellers can get around these inconveniences with a system of shuttle buses and mini-tours. But with the prices so reasonable, there is every incentive to rent your own Jeep. "Hello Mister, Transport?" touts hiss from many a street corner, but small car-hire agencies are better value from only 60,000rp (£4) per day with chauffeur.

Petrol is extra, but costs only 7p per litre. Self-drive may save you a pound per day (an international drivers licence is required) but employing a driver saves you a lot of worry avoiding pot holes, pedestrians, chickens and oncoming vehicles and leaves you a chance to enjoy the scenery.

Liberated from the constraints of the dreaded *bemos* mini-vans it is easy to reach idyllic but lesser known villages like Jeph, Jugu or Jatiuh where the stacked emerald rice terraces are at their most spectacular. A Jeep also makes it easier to descend the rough road into Mt Batur's volcanic crater, or to reach the delightfully forgotten ruins of Ujung water palace near the quiet royal city of Amalpur. And however you travel, with fewer tourists, even the great, hawker blighted temples at Besakih and Mengwi regain their charm.

At any time, Balinese smiles seem remarkably immune to the tourist borne infection of cynicism. But now, more than any time in decades, you'll have much of the enchanted island to yourself.

BACK TO BALI

Getting there

There are no direct flights between the UK and Bali; the quickest route, avoiding Jakarta, is via Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. Discounted fares are widely available; for example, Quest Worldwide (0181-547 3322) has a London-Bali return fare of £443 on Singapore Airlines, £445 on Malaysia.

Red tape

No visas are required for short-term visits by British passport holders.

Tourist information

Indonesian Tourist Office, Second Floor,

Whitehall House, 41 Whitehall, London SW1A 2BY, 071-493 0030.

Government warnings

Earlier this week the Foreign Office softened its travel advice for Bali: "As the situation in Bali has been relatively calm, and tourist services are operating normally, the Embassy has at present no basis for advising against the resumption of tourist visits to Bali (transferring Jakarta as necessary)."

For the country as a whole, the FO line for travellers is that "We recommend for the time being that only those with a

pressing need should visit Indonesia."

For the latest Foreign Office advice, contact the Travel Advice Unit on 071-238 4503 or 4504, or fax 071-238 4545; on the Internet, at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/> or on BBC-2, Coefax from page 470 onwards.

The US authorities take a sterner line: "The Department of State warns all U.S. citizens to defer travel to Indonesia and strongly urges those Americans in Jakarta and Surabaya to depart as soon as possible. Americans in other parts of Indonesia, including Bali, should consider departing the country at this time."

Simon Calder

Flying in the face of reason

In 1983 I tried to cheapskate-it to India by buying tickets from a bucket-shop in London. The carrier was to be an airline called Ariana Afghan; I hadn't heard of them but they sounded exotic – and cheap.

The first intimations that this was going to be the Flight to Hell was the Aeroflot plane standing at Heathrow ready to take us on the first stage of the journey to Moscow. The vicious-looking grey brute of a plane reminded me that this particular airline was part of its country's armed forces reserve. It took off with the roar from Armageddon and accelerated like an SS20 missile on speed. The stewards were frightening; the stewardesses even more so.

We stopped at Prague, then Moscow, and were herded on to an Ariana Afghan DC-10

Even seven years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cheapest way to reach Asia is aboard an Eastern bloc airline. Graham Hoyland recalls his hair-raising attempt to save cash on a trip to Delhi

that seemed to be leaking fuel from its wings. I wondered what the spare-parts contract could be considering that this was an American aeroplane owned by a country that was under occupation by Russia, which was still having a Cold War with America...

It was early on Monday morning, and a group of Russian hard-men got on board, presumably en route for a week's oppression in Kabul. The one sitting behind me suddenly grasped my seat in both hands and unaccountably launched into a frenzy of head-butting. The seat twanged and thumped against his forehead

while I politely leaned forward and gazed out of the window. Kabul airport was a sea of USSR helicopter gunships, and all photography was strictly

was the head of a Marco Polo sheep mounted on the wall wearing a startled expression and the legend "Stuffed by Jones Bros. Seattle". You

The vicious-looking grey brute of a plane reminded me that this airline was part of its country's armed forces reserve

banned. We learned here that the local rebels used Ariana Afghan flights for missile practice, which explained the unconventional, low, jinking landing approach.

In the airport lounge there

wouldn't think they would brag about it.

Eventually we made it to Delhi, had mouths of happy Himalayan climbing but eventually had to face the real danger – the return flight.

This was even worse: 13 hours lying on the floor at Delhi airport waiting for the flight. Then we got stuck at Kabul gazing at that bloody sheep again. Then we were stranded in Moscow for three days over some military Red-Square holiday, and were put in an awful hotel with Dominatrix Russian waitresses: "You! Don't sit there! Sit there!"

But the worst moment of all came as the knackered DC10 attempted to land at Prague for the second time.

The three-day wait at Moscow had been caused by heavy fog at Prague airport, and the airline had obviously been

given instructions to move us on, fog or no fog. On his first attempt to land the poor pilot had been completely unable to see any airport lights at all, and we were now on the second, eerily silent approach glide towards oblivion. The atmosphere in the plane was extremely tense, and the fog outside the windows was so thick they looked as if they were stuffed with cotton wool. Suddenly my straining eyes glimpsed the ground racing past at 200 miles per hour. Not down there!

The plane reared up wildly, and the screaming engines clawed us back up into the sky. The intercom crackled, and the pilot's voice, high on fear and tension came through. "We have," he announced, "just missed Prague Airport".

Well, thank God for that, I thought.

A starring role in your own holiday

In Bangladesh, writes Paul Smith, you'll find yourself the centre of attention

Walking out on to the verandah of the Pink Palace in Dhaka is like stepping out on to a stage, with crowds pointing and giggling. Tourists are always objects of entertainment in Bangladesh. This is no place for the shy, but while the endless staring and questions (often about how much you earn and how much your camera is worth) can be annoying, the vast majority of people are genuinely curious and interested in you.

The Pink Palace, or Ahson Manzil, with its turn-of-the-century grandeur, is as good a place as any to start a tour of Dhaka. The interior has been delightfully restored to its former glory using pictures taken in 1944 to create exact replicas of the period. Incredible attention to detail has been taken right down to the last teaspoon in the elaborate dining hall – and the decor and furniture ooze money.

From the first-floor verandah you look down on the Buriganga river which runs through Dhaka. A boat trip on its murky waters gives a great insight into the bustling life of the city's waterways. From Sadarghat nearby it is possible to hire a small boat for about 50p an hour and watch the families of 12 being ferried across the river by a boat driver armed with a single oar. Meanwhile, the big passenger ferries preparing to head down river sound their horns and beckon out black smoke as they warm up their engines – adding to the city's polluted atmosphere – and boat boys haul up buckets of black water to wash themselves and their clothes, though you wonder if they might be cleaner if they didn't bother.

These sights and sounds mean you are never in any doubt that you are in the Indian sub-continent. Yet the streets are cleaner and less pot-holed than in many Indian cities, and the absence of hulked cars and roaming cows (being a Muslim country, they have no sacred status in Bangladesh) makes walking around less a case of running the gauntlet.

Of the city's mosques, the 17th-century seven-domed Sat Gumbad is among the most impressive. The modern National Mosque, while hardly rivaling the Taj Mahal in beauty stakes, is worth a look simply for its sheer size and brash, functional architecture. Bangladeshi hospitality is prevalent even in the mosques and you may well find yourself invited in by worshippers and given a friendly quiz on your own religious beliefs.

Another good place to meet English-speaking Bangladeshis is at Sonargam, a hectic hour-long bus ride from Dhaka, and the most popular tourist spot for the city's residents. The former imperial capital of the country now houses the national Folk Arts and Crafts Museum and, more interestingly perhaps, is next door to Paiman Nagar village.

Effectively just one long street of crumbling, ornate houses, the village was deserted by Hindu landowners who left after Partition, and their former homes are now used by villagers squatting in the once glorious buildings. Paiman Nagar has the feel of a ghost town and for a bit of loose change small boys roaming the streets are happy to show visitors inside some of the former homes of the rich.

Back in Dhaka itself, the National Museum helps fill in some of the details on the creation of East Pakistan – which became Bangladesh after the war of liberation in 1971. But visitors will be disappointed in the Bengal tiger display – the fact that it is currently empty could be interpreted as a comment on the animal's fate in the country.

If Dhaka has a problem as a tourist destination, it is that once the day's sight-seeing is over there is very little to do. Being Islamic, the country is virtually dry and even eating out offers little pleasure: a repetitive diet of mutton or chicken with rice and dahl. Escape to the upmarket Gulshan district and the city's five-star hotels. This is about the only place where your foreign features don't excite any interest from the people around you, allowing you a break from the attentions which can make you feel like a visiting head of state.

The national airline, Bangladesh Biman Airlines (0171-629 0252) flies from Heathrow to Dhaka every day apart from Wednesday and Friday. The lowest fares are likely to be found through the airline's consolidator, AETT (0171-377 9505), which is quoting £435 return for travel in June. British citizens need a visa to enter Bangladesh. These are available at a cost of £40 from the High Commission at 28 Queen's Gate, London SW7 (0171-584 0081), or consulates in Manchester and Birmingham, or – easiest of all – on arrival at Dhaka.

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The world is your village

Moody mountains, empty beaches, great pubs – Rosses Point has acquired near mythical status. And now you can find it on the Internet, writes **Jack O'Sullivan**

On a stuffy day in London, when the west of Ireland seems very distant, I often imagine myself back in Rosses Point in county Sligo, perhaps the loveliest village in the country. My grandmother was born nearby and, for nearly a century, our family has returned as often as possible to a place that has acquired mythical status.

For me, like many others, the Point has always been magical: wonderful seascapes and empty beaches, plus two offshore islands. There is Oyster Island, by which you can spend hours watching cormorants flying just above the water. And Conec, which has a stone chair upon which St Patrick is said to have sat, and its own pub, where the good saint may have missed. Opened when it "feels right", the owner is John McGowan, whose family can claim to be the sole remaining permanent residents.

Moody mountains encircle the landscape. On one side is Ben Bulbin, on the other that rounded matriarch, Knock na Rea, atop of which is buried the Celtic queen Maeve. Then there is the championship golf course, which plays differently every day with the changing seasons. There's a yacht club, a good hotel, the Yeats' Country, and wonderful pubs – Austie's for hot whiskeys when a gale's blowing, Hackett's for a chat, Harry's for a song, Nifty's for a bender. Such a shame they're all so far away.

I'm not the only long distance dreamer about the Point. W B Yeats, though he lived for much of his life in England,

spent a lot of his boyhood in the village and, as he wrote four months before his death: "Under bare Ben Bulbin's head/In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid". The Point captured his heart and inspired his poetry. It is easy to picture him walking the fields in the lower Rosses – tiny, hilly outcrops, with rocks jutting out that feel like the remains of an ancient civilisation, occupied now only by the fairies. His brother, Jack, painted local scenes, as ships sailed past Rosses, a smugglers' haven, down the channel into the port of Sligo five miles away.

There are thousands of other Rosses lovers scattered around the globe. After all, the village was built on a seafaring tradition: it has produced more than 50 captains in the Merchant Navy this century alone; a long list of Devaneys, Bruens and Gillens who went to sea. The pubs are filled with the memorabilia they brought back. The world is dotted with the descendants of those who jumped ship and never returned or who chose to settle their families in great ports such as Liverpool and New York.

Now, thankfully, we can all talk to each other, as if we were, indeed, having a few pints together. Rosses Point has set up its own web site, complete with pictures. There is a "Captain's log", where the diaspora post their messages about what they are doing these days in Australia, America and elsewhere - and when to expect them back in the Point. It's all thanks to Kieran Devaney, a producer with Sky



Far left, the Metal Man points to a safe channel past Rosses Point in WB Yeats' beloved County Sligo (above)

Photograph:
Adam
Woolfitt/
Robert Hardin
Picture Library

Television and the Liverpool-born son of a Rosses Point man, who ended up working as a Commodore with B&I shipping

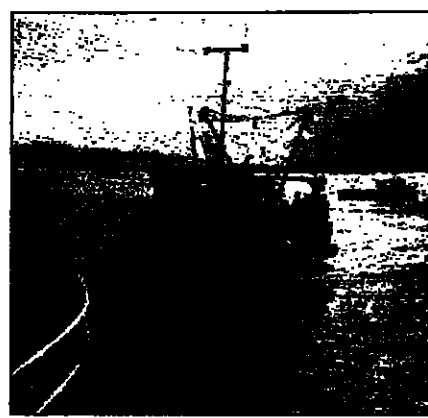
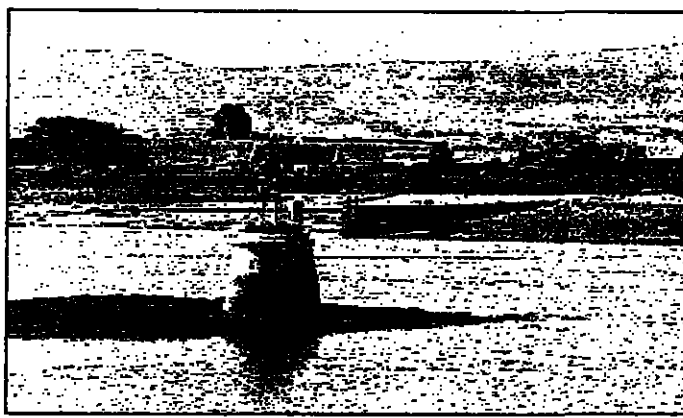
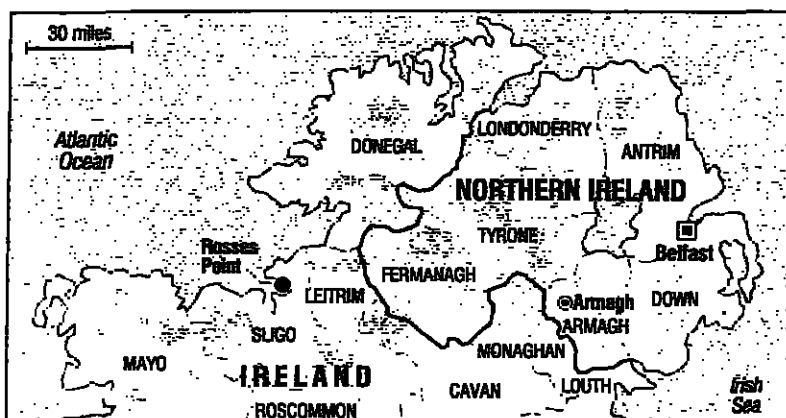
So there is no need to daydream any more. You just plug into the Net and find out the latest news about the village, generally disseminated by a character masquerading as the Metal Man. He is a famous landmark, a 12R-high Georgian statue, dressed in a naval uniform, who points towards the safety of the deep channel for passing shipping. Dubbed "the only Rosses Point man never to have told a lie," the Internet Metal Man posts messages about who he has seen lately walking towards the pub for a "heart starter".

At Christmas, much of the community gathered in Aussie's when the site went live on line and a stream of messages went back and forth around the world. "People talk of technology killing community," said Noel Kilgallon, a local artist and writer, "but here is a case of it bringing us closer." He likened the event to the whole village gathered around the first valve wireless when it arrived in the Point. There has even been a message from one Adam J Sippola, who announced: "Greetings. I am the reincarnation of WB Yeats. I was reborn on Saturday, January 28 of 1978."

The web site fits the spirit of Rosses Point, says local resident Willie Murphy, who went to sea himself for some time, and whose two uncles were captains. "The perspective of this seafaring community has always been outwards. You would find old guys who had never been inland in Ireland but had been around the world. I remember a row in Austie's over the siting of a pool table in a small port somewhere in North Africa."

These days, however, few people from the Point go to sea and the place has been undergoing something of an identity crisis. Better-off "blow-ins" with new suburban homes and good jobs in nearby Sligo town have begun to outnumber the original residents. Willie Murphy says the Internet, in drawing together the virtual community of Rosses Point, has arrived at an opportune moment. "It makes memories of the past accessible to new people and helps give them a sense of the place."

And if you're thinking of taking a holiday, it gives you a chance to get an insight into a village where, like any place you pass through, it's hard to feel at home during a brief visit. You'll be posting your own messages after seeing the reality.



Web site: <http://www.rossespoint.com>

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TRAVEL: UK, EIRE

FAX: 0171 293 2505

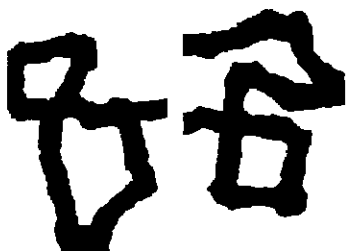
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In a pleasant, prosperous and, finally, peaceful city, Nicole Veash finds fire and brimstone – but only in Ian Paisley's pulpit on a Sunday morning

Why go now?

Because after George Mitchell's Good Friday peace agreement and the result of the referendum, Belfast is experiencing a sustained period of calm. Forget images of grim streets and paramilitary murals; Belfast's late-Victorian splendour shows another, prosperous side to a settlement set in the natural harbour of Belfast Lough.

Beam down

Competition among airlines between mainland Britain and Belfast is intense, which explains why the lowest fare from London is a reasonable £69 return, including tax. British Airways (0345 222111) and British Midland (0345 554554) fly from Heathrow to the international airport of Aldergrove.

Jersey European (0990 676676) has the same fare to Belfast International from Stansted, or to the more convenient Harbour airport from Gatwick. There are good connections to both airports from other UK cities.

Get your bearings

Aldergrove is a good half-hour from the city, with a bus (£4.50) every 30 minutes or so. Better still, take a taxi and ask the driver to take you the back way, through rolling, heather-covered hillsides. The taxi will also weave its way to the top of either Shankill Road or Falls Road before reaching the city centre. From City airport, you can get a cab to the centre in 10 minutes, or take a train.

Check in

The four-star Europa Hotel (01232 327000), one of the most bombed hotels in the world, is the city's most expensive. Although the Europa has a certain faded prestige, don't expect fantastic rooms, although the friendliness of the staff more than makes up for this.

Since the 1994 ceasefire, other reasonably-priced hotels have sprung up across the city centre. Next door to the Europa is the newly built Jury's Inn (01232 533500). This is the one taxi drivers recommend, because it is clean and you can



Looking west over Belfast from the Europa, which has the dubious distinction of being the most bombed hotel in Europe

Photograph: Brian Harris

48 hours in Belfast

cram as many people as you like in one room for the same price. Neither hotel is in a particularly scenic location, but they are well-placed for browsing round the city centre.

On a lower budget, Malone Guest House (01232 669565) and Stranmillis Lodge (01232 682009) are based in the well-to-do, tree-lined end of Belfast. Neither is further than 15 minutes from the city centre in a taxi. Or you could try Arnie's Backpackers (01232 342867).

Take a walk

Belfast is a small city — you can easily explore it in a day. Start at the impressive City Hall in Donegal Square. The white Portland stone dome dominates the town centre, recalling the city's prosperous imperial heritage. It is worth taking a guided tour (10.30am and 2.30pm daily).

Cross over the square and have a browse around the Linenhall Library, founded in 1788 and essential for anyone keen to get a better understanding of the history of the Troubles. Then walk to the far end of the High Street, the oldest part of the city, which still has an 18th-century atmosphere. Near the docks you can see the Prince Albert Memorial Clock and more of the classical buildings that grace Belfast, including the restored Custom House.

Lunch on the run

To glimpse real Belfast, go to the pubs. From the many sound drinking holes, two stand worthy of mention. The famous Crown Liquor Saloon, built 1885 and preserved by the National Trust, is a beautifully embalméd gin palace with paneled saugs, ornate tiling and original gaslights still in place. Champ (an Irish speciality of creamy mashed potatoes and chives) and sausages costs about £3. The Kitchen Bar, in the Cornmarket, is one of the friendliest old-fashioned pubs in town. The narrow, no-frills bar shows you grumpy Belfast. Their Paddy's pizzas, under a five, are excellent lunch fare.

Cultural afternoon

Images of the Shankill and the Falls flashing across a TV screen constitute most people's view of Belfast and these are places worth seeing. What really strikes a visitor is the way in which two similar ribbon developments exist right next to each other. The proximity between the Protestant Shankill and the Catholic Falls is shocking.

The two communities are carved up by the peace line, a wall that meanders through the area, sometimes slicing streets in half. In places it is a 20ft wedge of iron, in other spots the developers have given it a two-tone garden wall look. Take a taxi here

and ask the driver to take you past some of the more colourful paramilitary murals. The locals are used to a few tourists, but don't take liberties by lingering longer than necessary.

Rousing dinner

Belfast is still a meat-and-potato place — not all of the locals are inclined to gastronomic experiment. Most of the eating places are situated along the "Golden Mile", a fork of two roads which lead up to the university area.

Those on a budget can opt for any one of a number of Italian restaurants. Speranza, in Shaftesbury Square, is popular with students and always packed. The portions are a good size. If you want to splash out, Roscoffs, also in Shaftesbury Square, is probably the most expensive eating place in Belfast. It was chef Paul Rankin who brought modern British cuisine to the city. But the decor and harsh lighting are less than relaxing. Another stylish eatery is Deanes, in Howard Street, worth going to just for the sumptuous decor.

Sunday morning — go to church

For some Sunday morning fire and brimstone, take a trip to the Rev Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church in Ravenhill Road. Experiencing his unique

mix of religion and politics gives you some understanding of how he reached his key position in Ulster's history books. For Protestants, St Anne's Cathedral, at the junction of Donegal Street and York Street is worth visiting as the place where Edward Carson — the man who symbolised partition — is buried. For Mass, go to St Brigid's in tree-lined Malone Road, south Belfast.

Sunday lunch

Most restaurants don't bother opening on a Sunday, so people tend to plump for a hotel carvery. The picturesque Culoden Hotel, in Bangor Road, a taxi ride from the city centre, is worth visiting just for its loughside setting. The Stormont Hotel, in Upper Newtownards Road, an unexciting modern building with good food, is a convenient place for your next stop.

A walk in the park

Join families, couples and a few other visitors for a leisurely stroll up the leafy, grass-lined avenue to the Parliament building in Stormont for that must-have photo. The Parliament building is a plain, grand classical construction built in 1932. It is now used to house civil servants from the Northern Ireland Office. It was in Castle Buildings, a low-rise modern block, that

the Good Friday deal was brokered. Parliament remains one of the most enduring images of the Troubles, a building which for many Catholics serves as a constant reminder of partitioned Ireland. The statue of Edward Carson gracing the front of the building is seen by nationalists as a nagging reminder of the province's unionist-dominated past.

Ice on the cake

Two other sights should not be missed. Queen's University (on University Road at the top of the Golden Mile), is walking distance from the town centre. The Tudor-style college, founded in 1845 by Sir Charles Lanyon, has an impressive facade and delightful grounds.

Walk back into town and towards the dockside redevelopment and take a peek at the Waterfront Concert Hall. The spectacular £32m building was designed in the city and built from local stone. It is shaped like a ship in profile and an aircraft in others to symbolise the two proudest local industries. It also represents the money that big business has been pouring into the city since the 1994 ceasefire. Spot the luxury flats and Hilton hotel being built next door — sure signs that the property industry has realised that Belfast is the new good thing.

GREEN CHANNEL

Anyone who has looked into "ecotourism" holidays will know there are quite a lot around, but they aren't necessarily all based on the same criteria. It seems that ecotourism can mean anything from living with an indigenous community in the Ecuadorian rainforest, to staying in a five-star hotel and going on safari.

To help you through this labyrinth of definitions and possibilities, you can turn to the Internet, where a bit of ecountouring will help you to get to grips with what you think ecotourism should be.

The Ecotourism Society

<http://www.ecotourism.org>
The website for The Ecotourism Society — a US-based organisation focusing on ecotourism world-wide — includes guidelines on ecotourism and a list of travel providers.

Their virtual "Ecotourism Explorer Path" leads you to a collection of vital facts, but also some nuggets of personal wisdom that real-time explorers in the ecotourism field have acquired.

Tourism Concern

<http://www.gnupc.org/tourismconcern>
This is the website for the UK membership organisation, Tourism Concern, which campaigns for change in the tourism industry and provides information for travellers. A new community tourism directory on its site lists holidays run by, and with, local communities, mainly in developing countries. Tourism Concern points out it does not have the resources to check out organisations listed thoroughly, so inclusion in the directory does not constitute Tourism Concern's "seal of approval". But all organisations listed say that their tours are either run by, or greatly benefit the community.

Green Travel

<http://www.earthsystems.org/green-travel>
This is both a website and a list server, which means you can visit its web-site or receive daily mailings from Green Travel subscribers over the e-mail. The mailings on Green-Travel come from both travellers and people working in tourism world-wide, and include discussion about ecotourism issues as well as postings from ecotourism operators.

Ethics in Tourism

<http://www.mch.co.uk/services/conferen/jan98/et/>
This conference is exploring some of the key ethical issues of tourism development world-wide, and particularly in developing countries. It is geared mainly to tourism planners or critics, but many travellers will find the discussions interesting and informative. The conference (which you can subscribe to on e-mail, or view on the Internet like Green Travel) started in January and is running until July 1998.

Sue Wheat

RED CHANNEL

Mean streets: US cities where the Miami tourist office hints that you may not wish to go

The new edition of *Greater Miami News* could hail a battle between US cities on how safe, or otherwise, they are. Boasting that robberies from tourists have fallen by 84 per cent in five years, the publication goes on to list six cities with more cases of recorded crime than Miami — which, according to latest FBI figures, was 50,000 in 1996/97:

St Louis, Missouri (51,000)
Honolulu, Hawaii (53,000)
Nashville, Tennessee (59,000)
San Diego, California (59,000)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (93,000)
Detroit, Michigan (120,000)

Selling the new Armagh: an inside story

The city jail once held Bernadette Devlin. Now it is a film set and tourist attraction — but it's still grim, says Simon Calder



The hard cell: reality is more chilling than the celluloid

Pat Brannigan's chains clinked quietly as he perched on the flimsy bed in the dank, dark cell. Then he started to tell me how pleased he was to be inside Armagh jail. "Look at the crowds outside. This is a great day for the city and, hopefully, it'll bring a lot more people here."

The city's lord mayor, wearing the regalia of his office, was speaking earlier this month at the opening of Ireland's latest tourist attraction. Armagh jail — whose catchment area included the region that I hope need no longer be termed Northern Ireland's "bandit country" — closed in 1988. But walking into the bleak hall of A-wing, an inhuman cage for humans, you feel that the last inmate could have been moved out just last week.

Armagh jail triggers all kinds

of responses you don't expect from a tourist attraction.

From outside, it is one of the grandest Georgian buildings in the fine city of Armagh; only the bars on the windows reveal its purpose. The prison opened as County Armagh's jail in 1780 and, in the intervening two centuries, thousands of prisoners have lived and died here. The last to be hanged in the yard was a Monaghan butcher named John Fee, who was buried, so legend has it, beneath the rhubarb patch in the governor's garden.

If you've not been in prison before, you will be surprised to see how much the reality resembles the image you've seen on screen. That's because many of the jail scenes on TV and film in the past decade were shot

right here. The opening scene of Daniel Day-Lewis's latest, *The Boxer*, takes place in A-wing.

Even on a warm spring day, when sunlight splashes through between the bars on the low, mean window, this cell-block is more chilling than the celluloid. What might, in more hospitable circumstances, be termed an atrium, stretches out for 50 yards and upwards for perhaps 50 feet. Every surface is painted a merciless grubby gloss that seems to reflect the hopelessness of incarceration.

A clanking staircase lifts you to the balcony, a sullen rib of steel that runs around the void. Visitors can wander into each cell in turn, close the door behind them and imagine the hell of solitude where the only light is from a sliver of window and the only human contact is through a slot in the door.

The exercise yard is hardly cheerier. Through a series of hulking great gates, you emerge blinking into the outside/inside world. Everything from the Turme to the walls to the slates is a uniform shade of grey. The bleak horizon is a high, austere wall decked with wire and broken glass. You are in the middle of one of Ireland's most historic cities, yet you could be a million miles from humanity.

The lord mayor assured me that it was pure coincidence that Armagh jail was opening in the same month that saw a majority voting for the peace agreement in Ireland's historic referendum. But the prison has a hell of a history. Many prominent figures, including the then Bernadette Devlin, were held here.

Perhaps, as well as a tourist attraction, it will become a sombre shrine to the lives lost in the past 30 years of the Troubles.

By the time you break out, you too may be mightily muddled: with excitement at such an extraordinary new development, horror at the conditions of a prison that was still functioning in the late 20th century, and a new-found respect for freedom. I just had to tell the driver who gave me a lift to the coast about

the day's experience. He smiled. "Yes, I worked as an extra in one of the films they made there. 'I didn't have to do much — every so often they'd say 'we need another warder' and I'd walk on.'"

He paused. "It felt quite strange, really. After all, I'd spent 14 years as a Republican prisoner inside the Maze."

Armagh jail is open at weekends until 28 June; call the tourist office (01861 521800) for times and plans thereafter. Admission is £1. Simon Calder paid £95 for a Heathrow-Belfast return on British Midland, and £10.50 for a night at Armagh youth hostel. At bank holidays, buses to and from Armagh are minimal, so he hitched.

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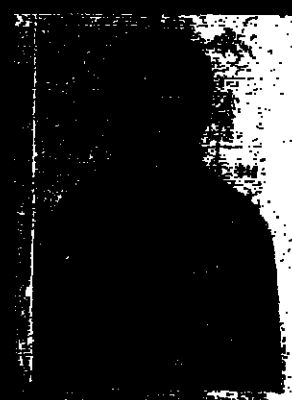
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In Gdansk you feel you are in the very essence of history. Yet most of the city has been built since the war, writes Hugh O'Shaughnessy

Nostalgia, they say, isn't what it used to be. Well, in the Polish port of Gdansk, founded in 997 as a base for evangelising the heathens of the Baltic and one of the most beautiful cities in northern Europe, nostalgia is fully up to the standards of yesterday. It is flourishing mightily in this former stronghold of the Knights of the Teutonic Order.

Walk through the Old City after dark and you feel yourself steeped in the essence of medieval mystery. The great shadowy bulk of Our Lady's church soars 250 feet into the blackness, its tower and pinnacles rivalled only by the gold-plated spire of the town hall. The ancient streets, lined with high, narrow palaces, residences and warehouses are brightly lit but mostly silent and deserted.

The city's location where the Vistula meets the sea allowed it to grow rich on the east European grain and timber trade and on the amber which is still plentiful hereabouts. The spirit of the 1,001 years of prosperous history of a city - also known in the West under its German name of Danzig - is almost palpable. Through the Green Gate at the end of the Long Market, as handsome a thoroughfare as you would find north of Prague, there is a glimpse of water and ships tied up while the cranes of Lech Waleśa's shipyard puncture the night sky to the north.

In the morning Gdansk is different. The northern light reveals the details of the great buildings in their most handsome detail: stone medallions and busts of Roman emperors and local heroes, lanterns and shop signs in wrought iron, a sundial dating back to 1589, the fountain of Neptune, grand staircases and chandeliers.

Mariacka Street is said to be the most



Today Gdansk is the dignified product of a terrible history and a nostalgic Polish dream
Photograph: Claudia Gruszka

Belle of the Baltic

beautiful in the city; less grand than Long Street, it is lined with shops selling well-crafted jewellery of silver which incorporates amber of every colour from creamy to russet. It was used as a set for the film *The Tin Drum* by Günter Grass, the great German novelist who was born in the city.

Push open the massive doors of Our Lady's church, so dark in the gloom of the night, and you enter a vast white space in the morning light, capable, they say, of holding 25,000 worshippers. The baroque monuments speak of the city's German past. Was the Goldenstern commemorated with a ro-coco inscription any descendant of Shakespeare's character?

But pinch yourself. Today's Gdansk is

the magnificent and dignified product of a terrible history and a nostalgic Polish dream; for all their medieval or Renaissance looks, few of the buildings have been up for more than 50 years.

Founded by Poles and a bishop from Bohemia a millennium ago, the city has always been a point of contact - and often a point of bloody abrasion - between Teutons and Slavs. For generations, the city's prosperous and predominantly German burghers were happy to live under the Polish monarchy, lending it the money it was chronically short of and building those palaces on the interest. When Poland was abolished and struck off the map of Europe 200 years ago they lived under Prussian rule. After the

end of the First World War, the League of Nations made the city the Free State of Danzig, but eventually the citizens turned en masse to the Nazi cause.

It was no coincidence that the first shots of World War Two were fired against Poland at 4.45 in the morning of 1 September 1939 from a German battleship, the *Schleswig-Holstein*, in the harbour. Gdansk survived most of the war unscathed, but in the final act of Hitler's war it was reduced to rubble in a fire storm, nine out of every 10 houses being burnt as 15 German divisions resisted the advancing Russians. The Poles observed grimly how the *Wehrmacht* was being annihilated by a Red Army which had started the war as an ally of the Ger-

mans in the 1939 invasion of Poland itself.

In succeeding years the Poles undertook a huge restoration effort, greater and, frankly, more successful than the one they undertook in Warsaw. From the charred timbers and broken bricks they picked out the indestructible stones and raised them again. The city has risen from its ashes in the most magnificent way and has once again that feel of Amsterdam or Leiden that came from the Dutch architects who built so much here.

But Gdansk and the Baltic riviera is for more than the aesthete with a taste for architecture and historical musing. The brand-new Hanza Hotel on the waterfront has excellent food and comfortable rooms,

and in its basement there is a small but lively casino. On the evening I was there one middle-aged man was splurging his chips on the roulette table, scarcely conscious of losing, which was often, or winning, which was rare. As his pile melted away a new wad of 200 zloty notes appeared from his pockets and the croupier accepted the money gracefully. On my table was a little old lady, who clearly modelled herself on Antonia Vassilova, the Grandmother in Dostoevsky's novel *The Gambler* and whose luck was remarkable. I should have followed her system. It might have saved me money.

The neighbouring city of Gdynia wants a racier image and one club ("Only for Gentlemen") Restaurant-Jacuzzi-Sauna-Gogo dancers") advertises itself, doubtless with a good deal of licence, as the Polish Las Vegas.

A few miles to the south-east at Maribork lies the huge brick fortress which served as the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights, the unemployed Crusaders whom the Pope set to preach and fight in northern Europe. They came to dominate the area before they were conquered by the Poles in the 15th century. On the wall overlooking the moat someone has scrawled in English "fight war, not wars". The motto has been unheeded around here, but perhaps now it will be, especially by Poland's neighbours to the West.

You can fly direct to Gdansk from Gatwick on LOT Polish Airlines. The discount agency *Fregata* (0171-451 7000) is selling tickets for £184 return in June. Euroline (01582 404511) has a bus from London for £89.

Polish National Tourism Office, First Floor, Remo House, 310-312 Regent Street, London W1R 5AJ (0171-580 8811)

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Elysian archipelago

We were sitting in the noonday heat at the tiny Adriatic port of Murter on the coast of Croatia and our young children were getting restless. The fisherman who was meant to take us to a cottage on a remote island in the Kornati archipelago had wandered off into the town several hours before. His boat was an alarmingly old vessel which seemed far too small to ferry us and all the provisions needed for a week's stay in a house without electricity or running water. The longer we were left on the dockside the more worried we became.

We were cut off from the world of travel agents, credit cards and complaint hotlines. The whole idea of an adventurous holiday amid the sparkling waters of a little-known marine national park — described by the *Lonely Planet* guide as "beautiful" but also "uninhabited" — was quickly losing its appeal. The children demanded ice creams, the hot wind picked up and there was still no sign of the boatman. My wife started talking about Cornwall.

Croatia is not usually this difficult for holidaymakers. Tourists, numbering up to 10 million a year before the war, are now streaming back. Our ferry from Italy was dominated by flashy types from Milan and Bologna whose BMWs were towing huge speedboats. Whenever

Croatia's Kornati islands are a wonderful if wild corner of paradise — as **David Shukman** and his family found out on a tranquil adventure there



we drove along the dangerously narrow coastal road, it was heavy with cars and caravans from Germany, Austria and Poland, though none from Britain.

Most visitors, booking their holidays through agencies, end up in apartment blocks or hotels in the more famous resorts such as Dubrovnik. We wanted something different — perhaps the Croatian equivalent of a French gîte but with its own beach. It was arranged with the help of a Croatian friend, and it had all the usual uncertainties of DIY travel. Hence our long wait on the dockside.

In the end, our fisherman returned and, with the ancient diesel engine chugging noisily, we picked our way through

the first of more than 100 islands making up the Kornati archipelago.

It turned out that our rugged helmsman and host, Predrag Juraga, was from one of 130 families who jointly own the Kornati islands. The original masters, the Venetians, lost so much trade to pirates in the maze of rocky islets that, in the mid-19th century, they sold the whole archipelago. With the onset of Communism in Yugoslavia, the fishing families were allowed to retain ownership because the islands were too barren to make a profit. The result, reinforced by status as a national park, is that this striking seascape is entirely free of development or pollution. Most visitors have to sleep aboard their

yachts. Our cottage was one of only a few dozen in the whole archipelago.

The house was in a pretty bay shaded by a dense collection of plum and fig trees, with olive groves stretching up the dusty hillside behind it. A small jetty and shingle beach lay a few yards in front. Paths had been laid over the roughest stones. Bottled gas powered a fridge. A well of deliciously cool water was close at hand. And, to the delight of our youngest children, Predrag and his cousins had constructed a seawater swimming pool.

Once the boat's engine had stopped, our ears adjusted to the gentle lapping of the waves and the utter tranquillity of the scene. Our only neighbours were a Croat couple, Zlatko and Visknja, on holiday from Zagreb. The nearest other houses — a small huddle of them — were several hundred yards away. And when darkness fell, we could count only two distant lights amid the islands around us. The gentle night-air carried the voice of a fisherman from half-a-mile away. We felt the thrill of being in a wonderful if wild corner of paradise.

Most striking were the extraordinary clarity and colour of the sea and the abundant and beautiful marine life. Snorkelling became a passion for all of us, with the youngest children gazing

through the plastic window of our Lilo, especially when Zlatko involved us in his attempts at fishing. Harpooning yielded more than enough for barbecues over olive wood, while overnight we snared a four-foot eel-like fish which ended up in a superb stew. As Zlatko and I swam back with this heavy catch, dawn broke and flights of duck skimmed over the mirrored surface of the water. I realised with pleasure that it was a Monday morning and that I had spent nearly two hours in the sea without feeling cold. I grinned so much that my mask flooded.

Each day seemed more restful than the last. The weather remained hot. My wife scoured the seabed for silver shells and starfish. We collected mussels and clams and even tried poor-man's caviar — the bright orange eggs of sea urchins. From the orchard around the house, the children picked tiny figs and plums. We dined outdoors by candlelight, drinking fruity local wines and marvelling at the lack of insects. Even the washing-up, at an outside sink with a breathtaking view of the bay, had its attractions.

Predrag came to collect us all too soon. His boat now seemed sturdy and welcoming. As we set off for the mainland very early the next day, we watched the Kornati islands change from a silvery-grey to a pale orange

while the moon sank and the sun rose. Specks of phosphorescence danced on the dark-blue ripples. The three-hour journey, like the week, passed in a flash.

David Shukman, the BBC's Europe Correspondent, crossed from Ancona, in Italy, to Zadar, in Croatia, with Jadrolinija Ferries. It cost £237.20 each way for two cabins plus £30 each way for the car. Tickets through Dalmatian & Istrian Travel (0181-749 5255). Rent for the cottage was £45 per day all-inclusive. Arrangements were made through Aida Gracin of Mistral Travel in Siberik (00 385 22 336578).

Croatia Airlines (0181-563 0022) flies daily from Heathrow to Zagreb, with connections to Dubrovnik and Split. There are also direct flights to Split from Heathrow on Saturdays from Starline on Wednesdays and from Gatwick on Thursdays. In June, Croatia Airlines has a £275 return fare to Split. British Airways (0345 222111) flies daily except Mondays from Gatwick to Zagreb, and has a World Offer fare of £226 return which must be booked by 10 June for travel in June.

Several tour operators offer inclusive holidays in Croatia; more details from the Croatia National Tourist Office, 2 The Lancasters, 162-164 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER (018 563 7979).

The 100-plus islands that make up the Kornati archipelago are jointly owned by 130 families of Croatian fishermen whose piratical ancestors bought them from the Venetians. They now have national park status



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Farne Islands: famous for Grace Darling -
and thousands of sea birds
Photograph: Michael Scott

Go wild on Farne

Where do you find puffins, kittiwakes and the odd rabbit? Sarah Jewell spends the day on with 70,000 seabirds on the Farne Islands



The Farne Islands, off the coast of north Northumberland, are a cluster of barren rocks, treacherous to sailors but a sanctuary for thousands of nesting seabirds and an idyllic spot for bird-watchers. During the summer little fishing boats take visitors out to the largest islands, Staple and Inner Farne, and, for a fee payable to the National Trust, one can bask in the beauty of a wildlife reserve where grey seals poke their heads out of the sea and kittiwakes screech in the sky.

The name Farne derives from Anglo-Saxon times when the islands were called the *Farna Ealande* - "Island of the Pillars". The first visitor was St Aidan, who in 640 left the hustle and bustle of monastic life on Lindisfarne (which you can see outlined on the horizon from the boat) for the quiet and solitude of Inner Farne. St

Aidan lived like a hermit, but his successor, St Cuthbert, was even more reclusive. He built himself a circular cell of rough stones, with a timber roof to cut off the distraction of the sky, and shut himself away for nine years to pray and meditate in total isolation.

St Cuthbert's only companions on the island would have been the birds and, according to legend, he was particularly fond of the large brown eider ducks that still breed on Inner Farne. Even today they are amazingly tame and make their nests bang up against the edge of the National Trust's wooden-slatted walkway that runs around the island.

The male eider ducks are black and white, as are many of the other Farne birds such as the guillemot, the lesser black-backed gull, the kittiwake, the terns and,

of course, the islands' most charming characters - the puffins. Known locally as the "tommy noddies" because of the way their heads bob as they walk along, they have chunky little bodies, large heads and thick orange and yellow beaks. They swoop about flapping their tiny little wings and look very comical. The terns, however, are not so sweet; during the breeding season they become fiercely protective of their eggs and dive-bomb unsuspecting tourists, sometimes drawing blood with their sharp red beaks. Visitors with bald pates are advised to wear a hat.

Birds are not the only wildlife on the islands; there is also a large colony of grey seals, the rarest species of seal in the world. Their creamy-coloured heads bob up beside boats and they roll and tumble like pup-pies in the waves. There are also rabbits on

the islands, originally brought over from the mainland by the lighthouse keepers before escaping and breeding.

The first lighthouse was built in 1673, and its keepers had to lug coal and timber up a 40ft tower to keep a fire burning all night. By the early 19th century the fires had been replaced by a revolving beam of light from the new lighthouse on Longstone island. Grace, the daughter of keeper William Darling, became a national heroine in 1838 when she helped her father save the lives of nine people from the wreck of the *Foyleshire*, and a boat takes visitors past Harker's Rock, where the ship broke up.

The visitors Sarah Jewell took six-year-olds Rita Pilkington and Reuben Carter on a day-trip to the Farnes.

tured my imagination - and, seeing how unsteady our sturdy, motorised fishing boat was on a very still day, I was even more impressed by how brave and strong she must have been.

Grace is supposed to have heard the cries of the drowning men and pleaded with her father to go and rescue them, but, as it was hard enough to hear what people were saying to each other on our boat in broad daylight with the water slapping up against the side and the terns screeching overhead, it is hard to believe that this bit of the story was true.

Back on the mainland, we went to the Grace Darling museum in Bamburgh, a few miles away from Seahouses. I was delighted to see the original Northumbrian fishing cobbie that she rowed in. The museum also contains lots of intriguing trinkets and relics from the Darling family, such as a long lock of Grace's hair, letters and the log book recording the rescue.

Four years after the rescue Grace died of TB, and we went to visit the ornate memorial to her in Bamburgh churchyard, opposite the cottage where she was born. It is the most beautiful, windswept graveyard, overlooking the sea and a fitting place for her to be buried.

Rita: I loved going on the boat and wanted to dive in the water, but it was quite wobbly and made me feel a little bit sick. I liked the puffins best because they are so little and cute, and I liked the seals because they

are really fat and chubby. The birds were all very noisy and the rocks are all white and smelly from their poo. There are 70,000 seabirds. I liked getting off the boat and going on the island but the cliff was very scary, and I was afraid that I would fall in. I liked going to see the house where Grace Darling was born and looking in the window.

Reuben: I was the first person on the boat to see a seal. I liked looking at the seals' heads in the water, they looked like fishing buoys. I liked putting my hand over the side of the boat and getting splashed with water and I liked the puffins best because they were so tiny and flap their wings so fast when they fly. When we got off the boat I saw an eider duck beside the path and I nearly kicked it by mistake. The captain of the boat told us that the guillemot lays one egg on the rocks and it is pear-shaped so that it won't fall off. I had a very good day out.

The deal
Farne Island Tours at Seahouses (01665 720308), open to 31 October (first sailing 10.30am). Cost: adults £3.90, children over five £1.95.
A National Trust entrance fee of £3.90 per person is payable on arrival.
Grace Darling Museum, 2 Radcliffe Road, Bamburgh (01668 214465), open to 30 September, Mon to Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 12-5pm. Admission free.

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Long Hill Lighthouse, nr Wicklow,

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662 8425) This octagonal stone

lighthouse was built in 1781 as one of a

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1836 and gutted by the ensuing fire, it

came out of service and remained empty

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South Foreland Lighthouse, St

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Souter Lighthouse, Coast Road,

Whitburn, Sunderland (0191 529 361)

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lighthouse was the first to be powered

by alternating electric current. Now

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are all on view and there is a video,

model and information display. Opening

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Fridays, between 1 April and 31 October.

Entrance for non-members costs £2.50

for adults or £1.25 for children.

Rhianon Batten

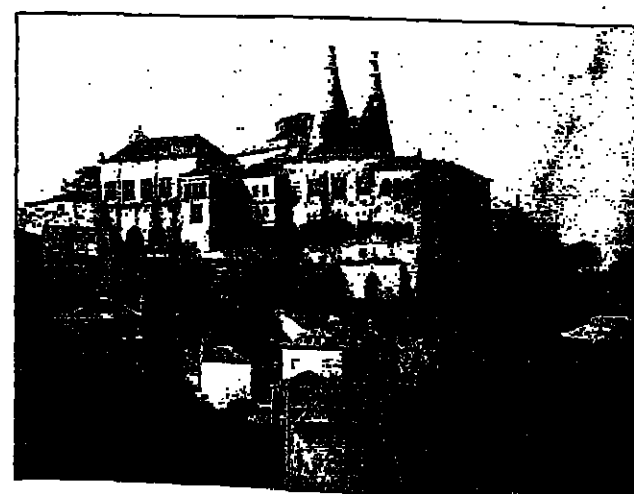
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Think on your feet

If you can use your brain as well as run, then orienteering is for you.
Eric Kendall reports on this combination of map-reading and fitness

"Shotover Park? Dunno where that is. Have you got a map?" asked the taxi driver, adding, "What you doing there anyway?"

"Orienteering," I replied. "It's all about, um, route-finding. Perhaps you want to come along - they say they cater for all standards."

Much, much later, deep in bluebell woods, accompanied only by the chirping of spring birds, I slid from a small depression to a large depression, all brought on by O (as orienteering is known in the trade). I knew exactly where I was going, but half of the control points were hidden in dips of various sizes, listed as "depressions" on my sweatily clutched route description sheet.

Most of the other descriptors were more obviously geographical (earth banks, path junction), though some, such as "veg boundary" brought on premonitions of an early lunch washed down with copious quantities of, well, anything liquid - it's thirsty work, exacerbated by long leggings you have to wear, whatever the weather, to prevent your legs being lacerated by brambles.

What all the controls on an orienteering course have in common is the ability to be confused with similar-looking points on the map. Which is the whole idea: it's a workout for the thinking runner, if that's not a contradiction in terms.

But it's not just high-speed map reading. On a reasonable-sized course, the solitary splendour of running across open country makes it a very different experience to a massed-start cross-country run. Good. The whole idea is not to be able to follow the herd, so staggered starts are used. Each individual finds their own way from one control to another, marking their control card with a needle punch. At the end of the course, the different punch patterns establish that you really did find all the controls.

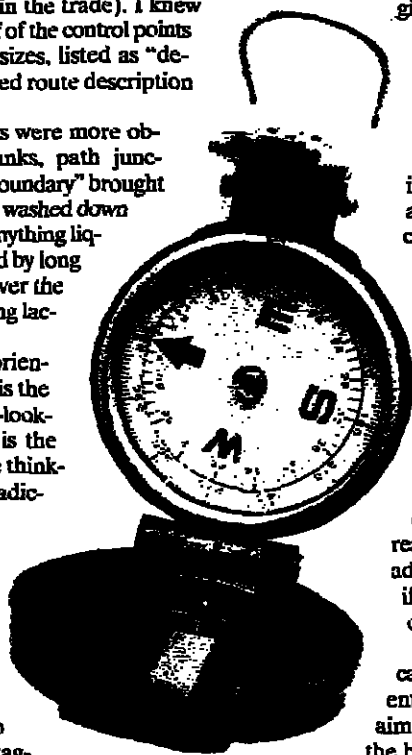
Various courses, from easy to hard, generally share the same territory, giving rise to startling apparitions charging out of the undergrowth from where you least expect them. Otherwise it's a relatively peaceful experience: just you, your map and the rasping of your agonised breath as you toil up yet another hill. The *Come Orienteering* leaflet says the physical exertion goes

almost unnoticed as you read your map and follow your route, but in other respects, it's quite accurate.

Having queued for a start time, map and punch card, you go to the false start where the timing begins and you sprint five yards to the master map to copy your control point locations. Then you start for real, working out a route as you go. Before this point, the only information you can study over a cup of tea and a bacon sandwich is the unmarked map, but at least it gives you the chance to work out which way north is, at your leisure, and perhaps even more critically, to distinguish fences from paths or contour lines or something called an uncrossable dyke.

For beginners, compass work and intricate map-reading are all a bit of a technicality: your route won't be very complicated, as it relies mostly on paths. You can easily see where you've got to go, if you have any map sense at all. Once you get competitive, it's a different story: your instantly planned route has to weight up the various options from point to point. The easiest way will be the longest, but the direct route might have almost impenetrable undergrowth. It's your choice. A serious map- or compass-reading error could lose you minutes and add to the distance travelled, particularly if an impassable obstacle is overlooked on the map.

Even on easy terrain, time pressure can induce mistakes in anyone with more enthusiasm than experience. You should aim for a level of exertion that still allows the brain to function and leaves you with enough co-ordination to clip your card at each control. Keeping moving, even slowly, is the key, getting your bearings as you go. At the highest levels, where long distances are covered in world-class running times, momentary indecision which costs just five or 10 seconds can be the difference between gold and also-ran. But unless you're representing your country or have a lot of money on the outcome, remember that orienteering - above all other sports - is not about arriving so much as how you get there. Besides, there's only orange squash and, inexplicably, results papers pinned up on washing lines to look forward to anyway.



Orienteering is not so much about finishing, it's about how you get there

Photograph: Penny Kendall

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GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

Contact the British Orienteering Federation, Riversdale, Dale Road North, Darley Dale, Macclesfield, Derbyshire DE4 2HX (01629 734042; www.bcf.co.uk - bcf; e-mail bof@bof.bcf.co.uk). Send an A4 size for a starter pack including details on local clubs, fixtures lists and what to do at your first event. Compass Sport (0181-892 9429; e-mail compass.sport@dial.pipex.com) is Britain's national orienteering magazine, with extensive coverage of the national and international race scene and related events, such as mountain marathons and mountain bike orienteering.

No special clothing is needed to start orienteering, although tracksuit trousers and trainers are sensible. Competitive orienteers often wear studded shoes and gaiters over Lycra leggings. You need a rollerball pen for marking the course on your map, a compass and a clear polythene bag to use as a map case. The map and control card are supplied by the organisers, covered by a modest entry fee.

Orienteering takes place all over the country, but the bigger the terrain the better. This weekend, World Cup races are being held in the Lake District and in

1999 the World Championships come to Scotland, which has ideal conditions.

If you don't fancy jogging, the Trail Cyclists Association (01531 632650) arranges 70 mountain bike orienteering events a year in the UK; the Porcel/Polaris Challenge (01246 240288) is a two-day off-road bike orienteering event held three times a year. Combining your skills, events such as the Salomon X-Mountain Adventure (0256 479555) offer biking, kayaking, hiking and orienteering over a two-day wilderness course. There are six held throughout Europe - the next one takes place in Scotland from 5-7 June.

Wheels on wheels

It's not rocket science - it's more complicated than that. Simon Calder tries to unravel the arcane rules for cyclists hoping to take their bikes by train

One sunny July morning in 1978, British Rail unexpectedly announced that the natural alliance between trains and bikes should be consummated forthwith. With a generous gesture, BR decreed that bicycles could travel free with their owners on all trains. As cyclists know to their cost, railways have been backpedalling on that decision for the past 20 years.

First commuter and high-speed trains were restricted, then a charge was imposed for travel on InterCity services. New train designs seemed intended to thwart attempts to carry a cycle aboard.

Untangling the rules in the aftermath of privatisation is even more complicated than the Rocket science applied by Stephenson. People planning to let the train take the bike have to plan well in advance and quite possibly pay for the privilege. From the tangle of restrictions afflicting cyclists, these are the most important links in the chain.

Bikes go free on North Western Trains, Regional Railways North East and - from this summer - ScotRail. But as anyone who has tried to get a bike space on the Glasgow-Inverness line in summer will know, you must book in advance on long-distance services.

The other good guys are local and commuter trains operated by Cardiff Railways, Chiltern, Connex, Great Eastern, LTS, Silverlink, Thameslink, Thames Trains and WAGN. Bikes go free off-peak, with no need to reserve space. The same applies on South West Trains, except for a few diesel services.

Most long-distance trains, including all services operated by GNER, Midland Mainline and Virgin Trains, insist that you book in advance and pay £3 for the privilege. A trick here is to use alternative services where no charge is made: North Western between Sheffield and Chesterfield, Silverlink or Chiltern from Birmingham to London, ScotRail between Glasgow and Carlisle.

A couple of oddities on Anglia Railways, local services cost £1, while InterCity trains cost £3 - and for those you must book in advance. Central Trains accepts bikes free on lines sponsored by local authorities (around Birmingham, and in Nottinghamshire), but charges £3 elsewhere. Great Western and Wales & West charge £1 if you book in advance, but £3 if you just turn up with your bike (and space is available).

On the London Underground, the calculations get really complex and involve the method of construction (which affects the size of trains). There is no charge for bikes, but there are lots of restrictions on times and lines.

On cut-and-cover lines (Circle, District, Metropolitan), cycles are allowed off-peak. On the remaining tube lines, bikes are allowed outside rush-hour on trains between surface stations: Hammersmith to Acton Town is fine, Victoria to Euston isn't.

The real heroes and villains in the bikes-on-trains saga are all railways serving airports in the London area. The Gatwick and Heathrow Expresses carry

cycles free any time. But on the Stansted SkyTrain from Liverpool Street station to the Essex airport, bikes are banned.

The easy way to long and winding series of rules is to buy a folding bike. I invested £400 in the remarkable Brompton bicycle, which compresses to the size of a briefcase (OK, a quite-large briefcase, but modest enough to have been taken in as hand luggage on a KLM flight). We have travelled happily everywhere together - until one morning at King's Cross when I approached the 7.30am to Newcastle a few minutes before departure with the bijou Brompton.

"Have you got a ticket for that bike?"

"No, I didn't think I needed one."

"Well you do."

As the minutes ticked away, and we stood discussing the matter beside the completely empty guard's van, I proffered £3 to buy one.

"No, you have to reserve a space at the ticket office."

I duly hooked a space, missed the train, and have managed to avoid travelling on GNER ever since.

A brighter attitude to cycling was demonstrated this week by Connex South Eastern, which on Wednesday launched a new initiative on its trains between London and Kent. The "Ticket to Ride" combination allows daytrippers simultaneously to book a train ticket and reserve a bike from any station in the region to Tonbridge and Canterbury, where the cycle will be waiting.

هكذا من الاصل

The beach before Baywatch

Frinton-on-Sea has a 'strand', not a beach, and no modern nonsense like surfboards.
Annie Caulfield visits this most genteel of English resorts

On Clacton pier there's a stern warning not to dive into the sea from the pier's sides or support struts. The warning notice ends with the words: "The pier proprietors and the District Council accept no liability for persons indulging in this foolish activity." And that firmly sets the tone for this part of England's east coast. Brighton has gone trendy, Cornwall inspires artists and Blackpool has been remarketing itself as post modern kitsch but Clacton and Frinton are proper: old-fashioned, non-nonsense resorts where holiday makers are known to be ill-mannered beasts from cities - and need to be told what to do.

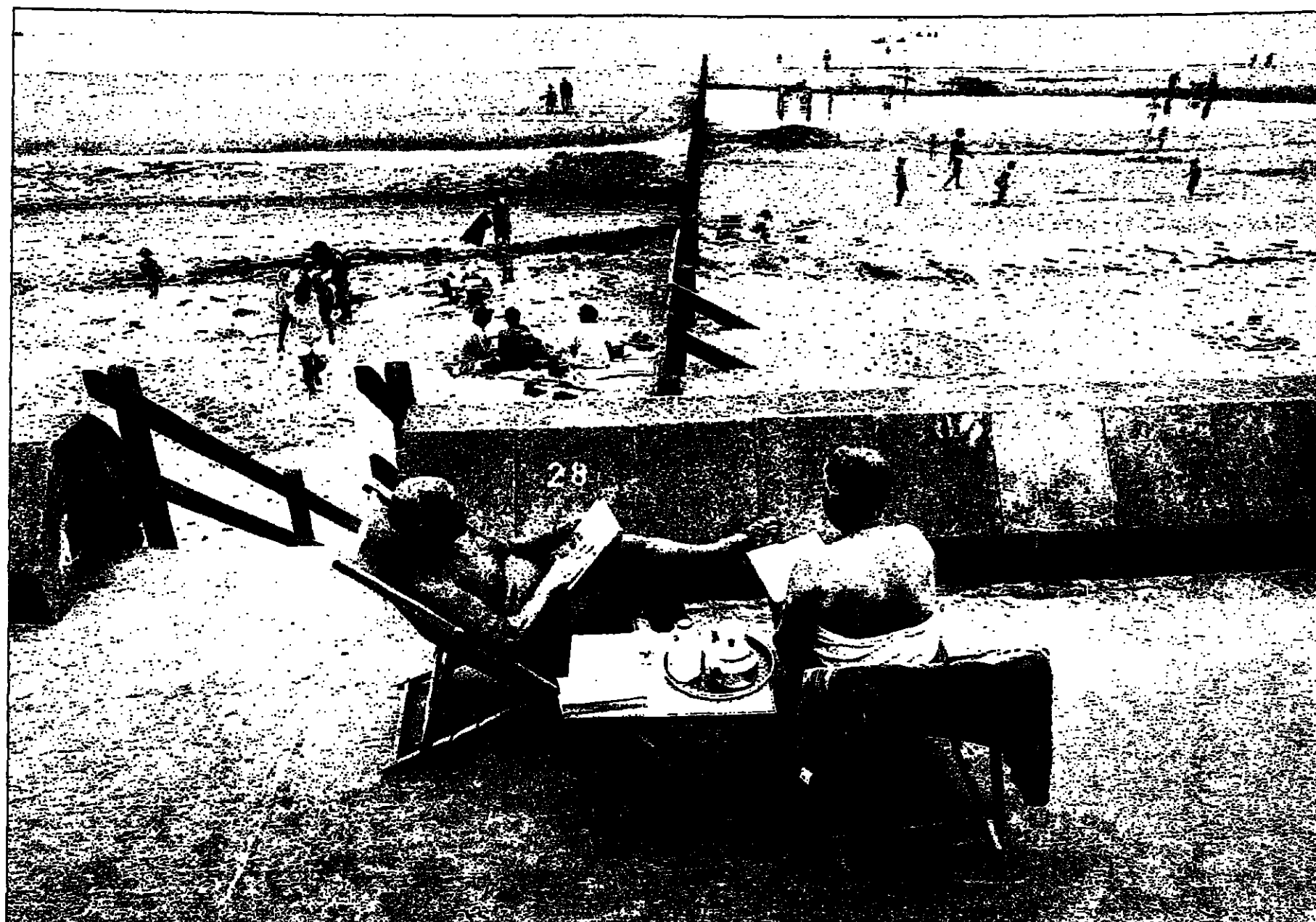
In Clacton there are cafés that still warn patrons not to bring in their own bread and butter and proudly declare that they are "not a self-service establishment". And they are further instructed "please remain in your seats and wait to be helped".

Such cafés not only like to keep their customers in their place but don't believe in bourgeois Continental pretensions – instant coffee is served in white Pyrex coffee cups, plastic flowers in plastic vases are the extent of design or theming, and they would never dream of serving fancy nonsense like microwaved lasagne. What sort of a meal is that, when people could be eating wholesome egg and chips or meat pies?

Clackson has made some concessions to modern fleshpottery, with vast gaming arcades and discos lurking in the basements of the big pink-washed hotels. But the arcades still have the old Penny Waterfalls alongside Virtual Reality and you just know that the hotel discos will have DJs who talk between the records and play "Three Times A Lady."

Although the pier and promenades are sturdily Edwardian, there is an overriding sense of being back into late Fifties England, when notions like topless sunbathing or clubs that stay open after 1am would be greeted with blank incomprehension. But Clacton is a San Antonio, compared with Frinton next door.

Frinton District Council ferociously enforces a bye-law that forbids the building or opening of any commercial establishment along the mile of its front. The coast road is all discreet, rose-bordered bungalows - low rise blocks of sheltered housing and some astounding outbursts of Thirties architecture surrounded by lilac and more roses. There are



a pleasingly large number of those white, curvy houses that took like cruise liners – the type of house that rich victims in Agatha Christie books inhabit.

Between the road and the lower promenade is a steep, grassy slope on which hundreds of old-fashioned beach huts nestle. They're pink, white, pale blue, apple green, teal veneer ... Each one has a distinct and lovingly cared for character.

On a fine day, elderly couples sit on the front porch of their beach huts and look out over a clean swathe of sea, sand and wooden breakwaters. Nothing to worry them but the occasional group of odd-looking characters from other parts of the country walking the promenade.

We odd-looking characters were very over-excited to find we had so much beach to ourselves. Although,

somehow, calling it a beach seems as inappropriate as saying, "alright mate", to one of the colonel types taking constitutionals along the prom. Frinton is a strand, definitely nothing so bucket-and-spadey vulgar as a seaside, or as American as shore.

One might enjoy a swim here, in a sensible and vigorous fashion, provided one isn't sporting a too brightly coloured bathing suit - oh

If Alan Bennett went to the seaside, he'd go to Frinton, along with the Queen Mother and the older characters from 'The Archers'

definitely bathing suits in Frinton, or, bathing dress, but no G-strings or unnecessary cleavages. And no confusing the local residents with bizarre equipment like surfboards. A spot of quiet fishing would be encouraged, or dog walking but not jogging, snagging, volleyball or, heaven forbid, jet skis.

This is a place where picnics are still ham sandwiches with a flask of tea and maybe a sticky bun. A place

**One might enjoy a swim here...
but only in a sensible and
vigorous fashion**
Photograph: Edward Sykes

where the fright of a Frisbee still raises startled heads from newspaper reading.

If you did do something untoward, like turn exuberant cartwheels, as a friend of mine felt compelled to after ingesting excessive ozone, the locals wouldn't turn nasty or make a scene. They'd smile slightly, with baffled, very British politeness and turn away, pretending not to see.

**Nothing happens
here, it's not
supposed to.
The local paper
had front page news
of a forthcoming
garden fête**

There was something wonderful about being greeted with a courteous, cheery "good afternoon" by every passer-by. And in having discovered a stretch of coast that remains gloriously and resolutely eccentric. If Alan Bennett went to the seaside, he'd go to Frinton, along with the Queen Mother and the older characters from *The Archers*, although Frinton is really much more *Mrs Dale's Diary*.

Nothing happens here, it's not supposed to. The local paper had front page news of a forthcoming garden fête, the girls' school sponsored walk for new netball equipment, and the startling revelation of faulty water pipes in several public conveniences. Incidentally, Frimton has about one public convenience per half-dozen people; I don't know if this reflects on the elderly nature of its inhabitants and visitors, or is just plain considerate hospitality.

By not standing for any foolish behaviour, like attempts to commercialise, develop or admit the existence of decades after the Sixties, Frinton has kept itself pure – a pretty, unspoilt and gently soothing place to visit.

It's like a mad old aunt in a print frock you laugh at but always want to give a great big hug.

A mystical magical tour



The Bizarre Bath walking tour, now in its sixth season

Photograph: Bath Chronicle

It's Bath as you've never seen it – with a mix of street theatre, escapology stunts and audience participation. **Muthena Paul Alkazraji** joins a comedy walk

On a stretch of uneven stone paving flags near Bath's Bog Island 60 people mill around in the dusk waiting for the start of the Bizarre Bath comedy walking tour. Through the crowd breezes a six foot man wearing a bright purple blazer and carrying two purple party balloons. He then stands up on a milk crate and introduces himself as JJ. "So, where have you all come from?" he enquires. After a few cautious replies from a number of US and Australian tourists, someone boldly pipes up: "I'm from Bristol with a party". "Well I wouldn't boast about it," gulps JJ. The irreverent tone of the evening is set. We move off en masse.

Along a narrow alley opposite the city's famous Sally Lunn's tea shop we re-assemble for our first address. "There is a rumour that we on Bizarre Bath don't know any history. That's not true," he says. "That's Sally Lunn's... and she has nice buns." He then dons a blindfold and announces his intention of seeking an intersection of two of the city's key lines, and he heads off waving his arms around like wild antennae.

Beneath the south transept of an illuminated Bath Abbey, our guide draws the crowd around him and assures us that an ancient Celtic marking on the stone courtyard indicates such an intersection of ley lines. The

marking is a dried spot of seagull mess. At this point an American woman lets slip a raucous peal of laughter. He informs us that further proof, should we need it, can be demonstrated by the site's capacity to suffuse imperviousness to physical pain. He then produces a lit cigarette, and with consummate sleight of hand-magic presses it into his clenched fist. We applaud convinced.

Bizarre Bath was conceived and written by a former Young Magician of the Year and street performer Noel Britten, who leads the walk on some weekday evenings. He and our guide JJ originally met at conventions of magic, the art of which, along with stand-up comedy and a thread or two of local history, is cleverly woven into the comedy walk. "Noel had the idea of doing a street show at night, and doing it in a walk around the town to avoid the locals complaining about the noise," says JJ. "This is now our sixth season." The city's newspaper has called it "an enormously entertaining piece of street theatre".

The walk continues through Bath's streets using comic ad-libs and crowd participation, including an escapology stunt in the river Avon. Nearing the Abbey once more, JJ informs us that if we do not want to be seen for the obvious tourists we are, we could comply with

a local bylaw which all Bathonians respect: the requirement of hopping across Cheap Street. The sight of 60 grown men and women bounding on one leg across a dark side street clearly bewilders three loitering youths.

Outside the Roman Baths we are given a brief account of the healing pilgrimages once made to the city's hot springs. "Unfortunately, the most prevalent disease of the day was leprosy. After a while, the situation became terribly unpleasant with the accumulation of body parts floating around in the water," says J. Placating the water goddess, Sullis Minerva, involved wrapping personal valuables in holy Roman papyrus before throwing them into the waters. Our guide borrows a ring, wraps it in papyrus, and, to prevent it sinking in the water, attaches it to his purple helium balloon. At this point he trips over his milk crate, and the ring floats away over the rooftops into the black night sky. Its owner is clearly unnerved. Sworn as I am to secrecy, I can, nevertheless, reveal that the denouement is pure magic.

The Bizarre Bath Comedy walk leaves from outside the Huntsman Inn every evening at 8 pm. No pre-booking is required. For further information call 01225 335124.

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Plot to please birds

Feathered friends usually get plenty of food in our gardens, but what about shelter? Anna Pavord finds out how to plant for a sanctuary

Being nice to birds must be part of our national psyche. The RSPB has more members – just over a million – than any other wildlife conservation group in Europe. In fact we seem to be a great deal nicer to birds than they are to each other. Every day some battle rages outside my window: a mob of small birds attack a hawk, sparrows brawl in the driveway, a magpie raids a nest.

They need us to be nice to them, says Robert Burton, author of the recently published *Birdfeeder Garden*. It is some compensation for what is happening to their natural habitats. Gardens, and there are about 38 million of them in Britain, are important for food and nesting.

Mr Burton came to our garden last week to sort out what was lurking there in the bird line and to tell me what I could do to help them. The obvious ones – blackbirds, thrushes, robins, wrens, woodpeckers, magpies, house sparrows, jackdaws, rooks, pigeons, collared doves, blue tits – are not difficult to spot. The problem (for me at least) lies with the other brown streaks and blurs that occasionally flash, unrecognised, through the undergrowth.

It is rather shameful, un-neighbourly, to have shared a patch all these years with creatures you can't put a name to. The problem with birds, though, is that they won't stand still. There is only the briefest of moments to decide whether

the blur has the red bit under the wing or the white bit under the throat that makes all the difference to identification. Binoculars are not usually to hand when you are gardening. Even when I am not, I find that by the time I have got the things to my eyes and adjusted the focus, the bird has moved on half a mile, and I am left casting around in the sky like a mad astronomer.

I learned to recognise goldcrests, which was a step forward. They had probably been attracted by the yew trees in our garden, said Mr Burton. Goldcrests like yews (and other conifers such as spruce) and cling their nests from the branches. A pair of them were working purposefully through a big pear tree, clearing out insects. That made me feel well disposed towards goldcrests. I'd prefer they did the job than me, with tar oil wash dripping all over my hair.

At the moment the garden is swarming with wrens. Or perhaps the same wren, extremely nifty on its feet. The crazy thing about the wren is the amount of noise it can make. It has all the attributes of a sergeant major bursting out of the body of a fairy. Wrens like holes in walls, piles of brushwood, nothing too far off the ground, for their nesting sites. I have sometimes found their nests – balls of moss mostly – wedged behind ivy on a retaining wall. Nesting sites in a garden are as im-

portant as food, said Robert Burton. A bird-table attracts birds but, for them, it is like a meal in a restaurant. A home implies more complex requirements. "Privacy, air, shelter from direct sun and a nice orderly disorder" are what they are looking for.

Disorder they have in quantity. I am glad that something is benefiting from the unraked leaves, the piles of unsprayed farmyard manure and stacks of uncut firewood that punctuate the garden. All these places are bliss for insects and provide breakfast, lunch and tea for many of the birds. Ants, which create havoc on the lawn in summer, were probably the magnet for the pair of green woodpeckers that are feeding there, said Mr Burton.

In terms of food, the greatest asset to a garden, as far as birds are concerned, is a wide variety of plants. This

does not necessarily mean abandoning garden plants and going native. Mr Burton pointed out how quickly birds adapt to the potential of introduced plants – even something as strange as the crown imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*). "I've seen tits and blackcaps going in for the nectar, almost as though they were hummingbirds," he said. But the ubiquitous Leyland provides *nothing* by way of food, though it gives some cover for birds. If you can, advised Mr Burton, use a mixture of field maple, hazel, holly and hawthorn instead.

Anything that fruits (such as holly and hawthorn) is good for birds. In a small garden, a crab apple, an elder or a rowan would be my first choice. None of them takes up much room, and all make a double contribution to the garden with their blossom and fruit be-

fore eventually providing food for birds in winter.

Some cotoneasters, although not native, also attract birds. The fishbone cotoneaster, *C. horizontalis*, is one of the best and is a handsome, neat-leaved shrub. The variegated version is even prettier, but unfortunately never seems to set fruit. Honeysuckle is useful. Although we scarcely notice the berries, they provide food for warblers, thrushes and bullfinches. Thrushes also like the berries of ivy, which fill a food gap in late winter. Robins and blackcaps feed on them, too, and the flowers attract a staggering number of insects, which in turn pull in different birds.

As for the rooks, my favourite birds, there is little you can do to attract them, said Mr Burton. They come and go as they please. Now there are no elms, they live in beeches and sycamores. They are by far the most entertaining of the birds in our garden.

A bird-table attracts birds but, for them, it is like a meal in a restaurant. A home implies more complex requirements

Photographs: Geoff de Feu & Mike Read/Planet Earth Pictures

TOP 10 GARDEN VISITORS

The Big Garden Birdwatch, organised by the junior members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, aims to provide a snapshot of birds visiting British gardens. This year's survey took place in January and shows

that the top 10 most common birds to visit gardens across the country are (in descending order): the starling, house sparrow, blue tit, blackbird, chaffinch, greenfinch, great tit, robin, collared dove and magpie.

Birdfeeder Garden by Robert Burton, is published by Dorling Kindersley at £14.99. If there isn't enough natural food in your garden to attract birds, Robert Burton recommends a bird-table and menus to order from CJ Wild Bird Foods Ltd, The Lea, Upton Magna, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 4UB (01743 709545). RSPB is at The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL (01767 80551).

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WEEKEND WORK

All the vegetables that hate frost can be sown now. There is at least a fighting chance that we won't have snow in June. Sow French beans, setting them three inches apart in rows 18 inches apart. Sow sweetcorn in blocks, setting the seeds 15 inches apart in rows 18 inches apart. Some growers find it an advantage to spread a sheet of black polythene over the ground first and plant through holes cut in the sheet. I hate the industrial air that black polythene brings to a garden so cannot vouch for the technique myself.

Sow biennials such as sweet william, forget-me-not, foxglove and honesty and perennials (aquilegia, violas, primulas) outside now to flower next year. Move the plants to their permanent positions in early August.

Watch out for blackfly homing in on the broad beans and pinch out the tips of the plants where

necessary. Aphids are also clustering under the new leaves of my gooseberry bushes, giving all the new shoots a wrinkled, diseased appearance. I have been waiting for birds and ladybirds to deal with the problem but they are evidently busy elsewhere. I shall have to spray with Rapid (ICI) instead.

Oceans of bedding plants are now flooding into garden centres. Before you buy, check that the compost in the trays has not shrunk away from the sides and that the plants are bushy, compact, firm and a good colour. There should not be a mat of roots hanging out of the bottom of the tray. Resist the temptation to buy plants that are already in flower. They will not give such a long display as those that are allowed to settle before they start performing. Before planting, add a handful of general purpose fertiliser such as Growmore to each square yard of ground.

The green party

Next weekend, London's private gardens will open their gates to the public. It promises to be a day of wine and roses for all, says Patricia Cleveland-Peck

London's secret gardens are intriguing - green and leafy squares locked up behind railings, to which few have access. Yet next Sunday, 7 June, many of these gardens will open their gates to admit the general public as part of the first London Garden Square Day. For the modest cost of a £3 passport ticket (£1 for children), we shall all be able to explore more than 40 urban retreats.

Visitors will have access to such spaces as the Dwarf Orchard Wildlife Garden, sandwiched between the inner and outer walls of Greenwich Park. A narrow strip of about an acre, it originally contained an orchard of dwarf apple trees planted by Charles II's gardener in 1662. A mulberry tree said to be 400 years old dominates the garden which is now a remarkable urban wildlife sanctuary with ponds, a tree nursery, beehives and resident foxes.

Dove Gardens in London SW5 is another small and very private place.

Among the evergreens which have been planted in keeping with the original Victorian plan, refreshments will be served and an art exhibition staged.

Belgrave Square, London SW1, was laid out by the Victorian builder Thomas Cubitt and was from the outset a most desirable address. Spoil from St Katherine's Dock in Wapping was used to raise the levels of the four-acre site and create a green space. Now there is a sunken garden and pergolas covered with roses, wisteria and passion flowers. On 7 June, live music from the Zephyrus Wind Ensemble will entertain visitors as they stroll beneath the enormous plane trees.

Plane trees have played a central role in the greening of London's streets and squares. It was the Victorian horticulturist J C Loudon who wrote in *Observations on Laying out the Public Squares of London* that the ability of this tree to shed its bark would enable



Cadogan Place Gardens, SW1, is one of the city's most desirable open spaces

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

it to survive the polluted atmosphere of the city. Several such trees are to be found in Manchester Square, London W1, where visitors will be able to enjoy Pimms and strawberries while listening to the Saturn Wind Trio.

The London Garden Square Day is in itself a triumph of enthusiasm over adversity. Ten years ago, its creator Caroline Aldiss was struck down with ME. "It was a nightmare. I felt claustrophobic in illness," she said. Her sole way to go and sit in the gardens of the square where she lived, "While I was there I thought, how lovely these gardens are - so secret, yet inviting."

Caroline knew it would be unacceptable for all the squares to admit the general public, but the idea of a special day when they could open for charity took root in her mind. After some research, she discussed the matter with Andy Wimble, Parks and Gardens advisor to English Heritage, who agreed to co-sponsor the event, as did the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust. Endorsements began to flood in. Prince Charles, Tony Blair and Alan Clark (whose Kensington and Chelsea constituency has a large number of private gardens) were among those who sent letters of encouragement. Most

importantly, more and more squares answered the invitation to join in. Caroline had a clear vision of London *en fête* and, above all, she wanted the event to be a celebration of local communities. Money raised from the day will go to a number of charities, meanwhile the public will get a rare opportunity to see some of the capital's hidden treasures.

For full details of participating gardens contact the London Tourist Board on 0839 123410 (49p per minute at all times). Tickets can be purchased from the garden squares on the day

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(Please note this address is for poems only, all enquiries must be sent to the address below.)

The poem should be no more than twenty lines, must be typed or neatly printed, and the poet's name and address must appear at the top of the page. Poems must be the original work of the submitting author and will not be returned. Closing date for applications is the last day of this month. Any entries received after this date will be submitted in the following competition. All poets who enter will receive an acknowledgement, along with complete competition rules, within nine weeks.

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"It's always exciting to discover new talent," stated Howard Ely, Managing Editor of The International Library of Poetry. "We're especially interested in poems from new or unpublished poets. I urge everyone who is interested in poetry to enter this competition."

For further information and to receive a copy of the rules, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
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2185, 2187, 2189, 2191, 2193, 2195, 2197, 2199, 2201, 2203, 2205, 2207, 2209, 2211, 2213, 2215, 2217, 2219, 2221, 2223, 2225, 2227, 2229, 2231, 2233, 2235, 2237, 2239, 2241, 2243, 2245, 2247, 2249, 2251, 2253, 2255, 2257, 2259, 2261, 2263, 2265, 2267, 2269, 2271, 2273, 2275, 2277, 2279, 2281, 2283, 2285, 2287, 2289, 2291, 2293, 2295, 2297, 2299, 2301, 2303, 2305, 2307, 2309, 2311, 2313, 2315, 2317, 2319, 2321, 2323, 2325, 2327, 2329, 2331, 2333, 2335, 2337, 2339, 2341, 2343, 2345, 2347, 2349, 2351, 2353, 2355, 2357, 2359, 2361, 2363, 2365, 2367, 2369, 2371, 2373, 2375, 2377, 2379, 2381, 2383, 2385, 2387, 2389, 2391, 2393, 2395, 2397, 2399, 2401, 2403, 2405, 2407, 2409, 2411, 2413, 2415, 2417, 2419, 2421, 2423, 2425, 2427, 2429, 2431, 2433, 2435, 2437, 2439, 2441, 2443, 2445, 244

The perfect match

Interior decorator Sarah Doe harmoniously complements her husband's furniture.
By Catherine Stebbings

Tim and Sarah Doe have the ultimate show home. A furniture-maker and interior decorator, respectively, they are a symbiotic husband-and-wife team, sharing clients and design interests, and for three years they have been working hard on their Somerset farmhouse. Their warm, Aga-heated kitchen is a testament to their talents.

Sarah has painted the walls in a honey coloured wash and decorated Tim's kitchen units in a distressed moss green that can withstand both mucky children, the black Labrador and all the usual stresses of a country kitchen. The floor is American country oak, supplied and laid by Tim: it is a perfect setting for the large oxbow table also made by him. It is the sort of kitchen most people dream about.

As Sarah explains "Our house is effectively our show piece. People come to see my painted furniture or paint effects and end up ordering one of Tim's tables." A wander around downstairs reveals more. There is a lovely drawing room with rustic, terracotta washed walls, a very convincing stone blocked hallway in mellow ochre akin to the local stone, painted furniture, wooden floors and tables to die for. It is all very simple; nothing pretentious, smart or unnecessary, just a home with a soul.

Sarah has specialised in paint effects since her early apprenticeship with an Knightbridge interior designer in the Eighties. Things have come a long way since she sold



The Doe family at home in their work

Photograph: John Lawrence

stencilled duvet covers in Camden Lock every weekend. Her skills now include mural painting, painted furniture and standard paint effects on walls.

While much of her painted furniture is distressed or aged, some include small motifs like ageing roses or a sprinkle of faded daisies. Her artistic talent is most apparent in the spectacular scenes painted on walls and especially on furniture.

Sarah will transform any piece of furniture but insists that it must be a well made in the first place. The shape is very important. Much of her work is done on modern pine furniture which has just enough detail in it to make it interesting. She will age it using a combination of colours, all mixed by her, and then distress them until they give the desired effect - making the furniture look as if it has been handed down through generations, nicely faded and well worn. This seems a lot easier

than staggering around the auction houses in search of the perfect wardrobe.

Tim's passion is wood. He trained as a boat builder, but one of his first projects was to make a wooden roof for his Morris Minor. Since then he has turned his attention to interiors; stunning wooden flooring, kitchens and traditional English furniture, primarily tables, in old pine, old oak and elm. His sturdy oxbow tables are magnificent, solid traditional pieces with enough marks, grooves and rough edges to make you wonder if they aren't as old as the house.

Most of the wood comes from reclamation yards or scrapped barns and boats. Tim loves the different characteristics of wood: "the strength and swirl of the grain, the tone, the strength". All the wood is treated with a caustic solution which chills whatever worm there may be and even the tones of the wood.

He does not profess to be a designer but

a maker of good strong English furniture - magnificent in its simplicity. It comes as no surprise to find his other love is Shaker-style furniture. Unfortunately, Shaker furniture demands more specialised woods, such as cherry, so the price rises accordingly.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of the Doe businesses is that both Sarah and Tim work to specification making almost anything possible. "Ten years ago," says Sarah, "everybody wanted me to do ragging or sponging, at the moment everyone seems to be looking for that old faded look or the stone blocking emulating the blocks of stone that are hidden beneath the plaster."

Tim and Sarah Doe, Muesdown Farmhouse, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6EG (01749 831225). Tables are made to order, prices start around £425. Quotes given for both painted furniture and interior decoration.

The tartars of cream

A taste of ... the West Country.
Nikki Spencer observes the gentle cream wars between Devon and Cornwall

Goosey yellow cream with a crust on top may not sound very appealing. But few visitors to Devon and Cornwall leave without having sampled a traditional cream tea - and as far as the locals are concerned, the better it is.

"Some people do find the idea of the crust on clotted cream worrying. They think it's gone off and even try to scrape it away," says Philip Rodda, whose family has been making clotted cream commercially near Redruth in Cornwall for more than 100 years. "But as far as I am concerned the crust is the best bit. It tastes richer and has a nice, almost nutty, texture."

He says the West Country tradition of clotted cream has much to do with the area's abundance of rich milk. Yet no one, it seems, is quite sure where the art of making what Gladstone called "the food of the gods" originated. One theory is that it came with the Phoenicians when they arrived to trade for tin around 500BC.

The longstanding friendly rivalry between Devon and Cornwall is reflected in clotted cream. Both counties claim it as their own and both maintain that theirs is the best. Custom has it that a true Cornishman will always spread on the jam first and

top it with cream, while a Devonian will do the reverse.

Clotted cream trails

■ Roskilly's, Tregellast Barton, St Keverne, Helston, Cornwall (01326 280479). The Roskilly family makes clotted cream ice-cream and fudge with milk from Jersey cows. Visitors can have a cream tea in The Croust House Restaurant ("croust" is the Cornish name for food that was taken out to the farmworkers in the fields). As well as the usual scones, they serve "thunder and lightning", a Cornish speciality of a split with clotted cream and syrup. Entry to the farm is free. ■ Rodda and Son, The Creamery, Scorrier, Nr Redruth, Cornwall (01209 820526). Rodda's has been supplying cream by post since the Twenties; regular recipients include the Queen Mother. You can sample it next Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Royal Cornwall Show in Wadebridge (01208 812183 for further details).

■ For traditional Devon clotted cream try Weston's at Kersdown Barton, Bampton, near Tiverton (01398 331272). This family farms sells direct to the public.

■ More than a dozen places serving cream teas in Devon and Cornwall are featured in The Tea Council's guide, *Best Tea Places 1998* (price £5.99 from The Tea Council on 0171-248 1024).

GAMES

Why do we pay for wordsearch compilers to conceal words in arrays of letters so that we can rediscover them? Or pay jigsaw manufacturers to saw a (usually pretty) picture into 1,000 pieces just so that we can put them together again?

It is for the same reason a child gets so much glee when she catches you out with a trick questions such as:

Q1: How do you get down from a horse?
... and why the cruciverbalist derives such exultant pleasure from inventing cryptic clues along the lines of:

Q2: I may have it (3)
Clearly the concealing and finding of clues is fundamental to human nature and people have a deep urge to create and solve puzzles.

This is not a modern phenomenon. Riddles, for example, permeate all cultures. History is riddled with them. The ancients held riddle contests much in the same way as we challenge each other over a pint of such lateral sophistries as:

Q3: What runs fore to aft on one side of a ship and aft to fore on the other side?
Perhaps the most famous classical puzzle of all time is the riddle of the Sphinx as solved by Oedipus.

CHRIS MASLANKA

THE PUZZLE OF PROBLEM-SOLVING

Q4: What creature moves on all fours in the morning, on two feet at noon and on three toward the setting of the sun?

Why puzzles are engaging is a puzzle in itself. Aristotle puts his classical finger on a couple of important clues. First he opines that a love of riddles reflects the human tendency to make metaphor; second that they teach us something.

Man has evolved to be a problem-solver. Animals - particularly young ones - exercise, in play, skills that they will later use in earnest. Play provides a safe arena where the imperfections in skills such as chasing, scrapping or escaping do not lead to serious consequences. Young children running and clambering over climbing frames are practising their physical skills. Language, jokes and puzzles are merely the mental form of this activity - the intellect at play.

But isn't play for children? Shouldn't we grown-ups obey that sportsman St Paul and put away childish things?
I think not. The world is perceivable in an infinity of ways and we can only handle it by categorisation. We view it through filters or, as neuropsychologists say, templates. As we age we get more rigid in our mental habits and it becomes increasingly difficult to see things in new ways.

In challenging the rigidity of our conceptual boundaries, puzzles not only rejuvenate and refresh, they also tell us a great deal about how we think and perceive, which is why they are of such crucial interest to educationalists, psychologists, mathematicians, artists - anyone interested in thinking about thinking.

What is it, for example, about the way we think that makes the following so counter-intuitive?
Q5: I know Bill has two children. He has told me that at least one of them is a boy. What are the chances that the other is a girl? - Well?

Solutions

1. You don't: you get down from a duck.
 2. Dot.
 3. The name of the ship. (Either that or a drunken sailor: probably the one whose use at our hands is so philosophically discussed in the sea shanty.)
 4. Man: he walks on all fours as a baby, two legs as a young man, and uses a stick when old.
 5. Two in three.
- Chris Maslanka will be presenting "Puzzle Panel" - a new series on BBC Radio 4 beginning on Thursday 4 June at 1.30 pm, repeated Sunday 7 June at 11 pm.

PANDORA MELLY

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

John Brown, 44, publisher.

I used to play a lot of cricket for the Virgin Casuals, which I started when I worked for Richard Branson. A friend and I were appalled that the proper Virgin team took it all so seriously. They shouted at us when we dropped catches, so we started the Casuals as a protest. It exists as a team to this day, and is quite successful, except that none of the players work for, or have anything to do with, Virgin.

But the two most interesting games I've ever played were ones that were made up. I went to school at Westminster, and one term we invented a game called Nelgeing the Flune, which we pretended was a very old school game that we'd rediscovered. It was a bit like lacrosse, except that you played it with tennis rackets and a ceremonial rugby ball. The Times came and wrote it up and everything.

The other game was about two years ago, when the Viz team and I went to a

charming hotel called Hunstham in Devon, which is like staying at a private house where you don't have to do the washing up. A number of people had asked us for a Viz film, and we thought we'd go down there and write a script.

We spent about four days in Devon, which was absolutely useless, because we couldn't write a script to save our lives. Instead, we invented a game called Stick Bongo which we played for hours on the lawn every day. You each have a cricket stump, and you have to kick a football and try to hit the other person's stump. We meant to copyright the game and make a fortune, but we never did, which is why I'm not going to tell you the secret rules.

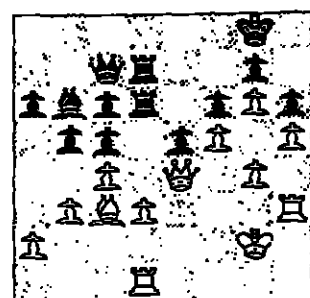
John Brown's participation in cricket is now limited to his publishing "Wisden Cricket Monthly". He claims that his cover price buys "the best cricket magazine there is". Available from all good newsagents. However, we're not going to tell you how much it costs.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

After disposing of the Israeli team in a simultaneous display last week, Garry Kasparov found another opportunity to show his speed of thought in a blitz match against Peter Svidler, played over the Internet as part of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the state of Israel. Kasparov won both games of the match, with a most impressive blend of strategy and tactics.

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Peter Svidler
Kasparov won both games, particularly in the first game. In a quiet Exchange variation of the Ruy Lopez, Kasparov seemed in danger of letting the game become too locked. He showed how effectively he had judged the potential of White's position here, in the diagram position after 37...Rd87, he pushed on with 38.g5!

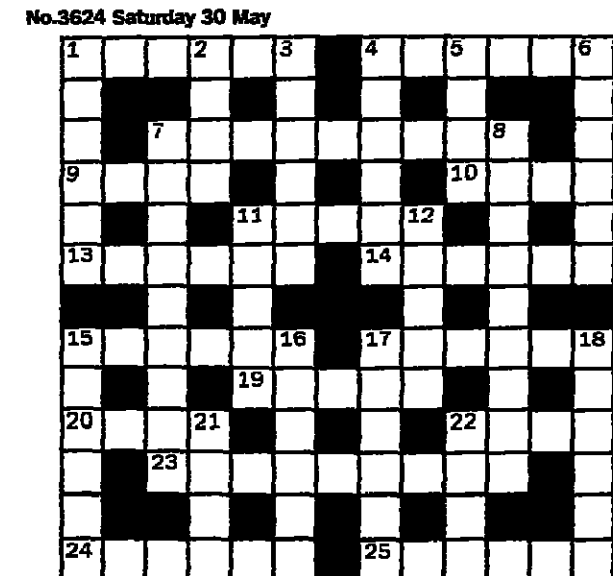
Now 38...fxg5 loses the crown, while 38...bxc5 is met by 39.h6, so Svidler tried to keep the game closed with ...Ba5, rather than allow underplay with 45.Qxb6 e4. Kasparov kept his grip on the me and set up the lovely 48.Bxb6+! At the end, Black is dead or either 54...Rg7 bxc7+ Kg7 56.Qb6+ and it's in three, or 54...Kh8 Qg1 Rd8 56.Qg6. Kasparov must feel content in his trip to Israel. If he beat four grandmasters simultaneously, then, for an hour, play a masterpiece in minutes, one wonders at he will do with plenty of e and only one opponent.



- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1 e4 e5 | 28 Ng6+ Kg8 |
| 2 Nf3 Nc6 | 29 f4 Nxb6 |
| 3 Bb5 a6 | 30 fxb6 Rdc7 |
| 4 Ba4 Nf6 | 31 f5 Rd7 |
| 5 0-0 Bc7 | 32 Bc3 Rd8 |
| 6 Bxc6 dxc6 | 33 Kf1 Bc7 |
| 7 d3 Nd7 | 34 Rc3 Bb6 |
| 8 b3 c5 | 35 Rf3 Qc7 |
| 9 Bb2 Bb6 | 36 Kg2 Rd6 |
| 10 Nbd2 0-0 | 37 Rh3 R8d7 |
| 11 Nc4 f6 | 38 g5 Ba5 |
| 12 Nh4 Nb8 | 39 Bb2 Qd8 |
| 13 Nf5 Bxc5 | 40 gxb6 gxb6 |
| 14 exf5 Bxf5 | 41 Qc3 bxc4 |
| 15 Qf3 Qd7 | 42 bxc4 Qb8 |
| 16 Qc4 Kh8 | 43 Ba3 Bb4 |
| 17 Rf1 h5 | 44 Bc1 Bc3 |
| 18 Nc3 Nd4 | 45 Qc2 Kg7 |
| 19 c3 Nc6 | 46 Qc2 Qb4 |
| 20 Rad1 Rad8 | 47 Kh1 Qa5 |
| 21 b4 Rf6 | 48 Bxb6+ Kxb6 |
| 22 h5 h6 | 49 Qc1+ Kg7 |
| 23 g3 Ne7 | 50 h6+ Kh8 |
| 24 g4 c6 | 51 g7+ Kh7 |
| 25 c4 Bb8 | 52 Rg1 Rd8 |
| 26 Ng2 Qb7 | 53 g8Q+ Rxb8 |
| 27 Nh4 Rd7 | 54 Rg7+ 1-0 |

Alexei Shirov has taken the lead in the match to find a challenger for Kasparov. He beat Vladimir Kramnik in 63 moves in their fourth game.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Captured (6) | 1 Code (6) |
| 4 Crops up (6) | 2 Dress (4) |
| 7 Type of sponge cake (5,4) | 3 Bed canopy (6) |
| 9 Religious song (4) | 4 At the other side of (6) |
| 10 Compass point (4) | 5 Lazy (4) |
| 11 Animal (5) | 6 Devious (6) |
| 13 Large wave (6) | 7 Portable weapons (5,4) |
| 14 Containing salt (6) | 8 Would-be seducer of women (6-3) |
| 15 Roofing material (6) | 11 Sandy foreshore (5) |
| 17 Jail (6) | 12 Linger (5) |
| 19 Hirsute (5) | 15 Suppressed laugh (6) |
| 20 Weighty volume (4) | 16 Persistently torment (6) |
| 22 Bundle of hay etc (4) | 17 Extol (6) |
| 23 Domestic appliance (5-4) | 18 Pointer (6) |
| 24 Wealth (6) | 21 Engrave using acid (4) |
| 25 Come out (6) | 22 Calibre (4) |

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Lady, 3 Sandbag (Ladies' handbag), 9 Copse, 10 Laquer, 11 Lob, 13 Temperate, 14 Debate, 16 T-shirt, 18 Bullition, 20 New, 22 Creeches, 23 Aline, 25 Enchanted, 26 Meet, DOWN: 1 Local, 2 Dip, 4 Aplomb, 5 Duchesse, 6 Addition, 7 Scepter, 8 Best, 12 Baby-teeth, 14 Delicade, 15 Teach-in, 17 Tissue, 19 Nod, 21 Wheat, 24 Ace.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

- Love all; dealer East
- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| North | East |
| ♠ 8 7 4 | ♠ A K Q 9 3 |
| ♥ A Q J | ♥ 10 5 |
| ♦ A 7 4 2 | ♦ 10 9 8 |
| ♣ 10 9 5 | ♣ 7 3 2 |
- West**
♠ J 6 2
♥ 9 8 7 4 3
♦ J 6 5 3
♣ K
- South**
♠ 10 5
♥ K 6 2
♦ K Q
♣ A Q J 8 6 4

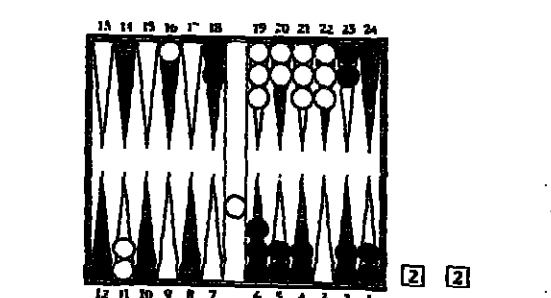
When you set out to construct a mousetrap, it is no good leaving the mouse an escape route. East overlooked this on today's deal but he need not have worried, for declarer still swallowed the bait.

After a pass by East, South opened 1♠ and North responded 1♥. Now East joined in with 1♣, but South's jump to 3♠ kept West quiet. North tried 3♣ but, with no guard in the enemy suit, South repeated his clubs. Hoping for the best, North raised to 5♠ and West led S♠.

It was clear to East that the defence had at most two tricks to come in spades and the heart finesse (if required) would be right for declarer. The only real hope was that his partner held a top trump honour which undoubtedly would be a singleton. If it was the ace, no problem, but if it was the king? He thought quickly: if he won with ♠Q he would advertise his holding of ♠A,K,Q and, after his initial pass, declarer would be sure to place West with ♠K if it was missing. So East won the first trick with ♠A and cashed ♠Q. Then he switched to ♦10. All went as planned: declarer duly took a trump finesse and so went one down.

What was the line of escape that East had failed to block off? Suppose that instead of playing trumps immediately, declarer had taken the precaution of crossing to dummy and ruffing the last spade. West's jack appears, the situation in the suit becomes clear, and ♠K can be placed with West. And how could East have closed the loophole? By playing the spades as he did but switching to a trump himself at trick three before declarer fathomed the true spade position.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



A chilly night in Baker Street saw Holmes in the box playing Black against myself and Inspector Lestrade. Our excellent game had somehow gone wrong and now we found ourselves on the bar facing a 5-point board and with another blot exposed.

The great detective pondered for a couple of minutes, his face shrouded in the smoke from his meerschaum, and then he reached for the doubling cubes and turned them both to 4.

"Hmm, somewhat precipitate, I think you'll find," said Lestrade, snatching the cube. I studied the position for a while but still thought that the basic structure of our position would give us a comfortable take. "I agree with Lestrade," said I. "For once Holmes, I think you should have waited a roll."

Four rolls later we found ourselves with two men on the bar and easily lost a gammon. I have learnt to take my losses with equanimity but not so Lestrade who felt he had been dealt a great injustice. "What luck, Mr. Holmes," he remarked. "No wonder you solve more cases than I do."

"No luck my dear fellow, but rather a clear understanding of the position and its possibilities. White's position is superficially strong with its 4-point board and two black men trapped but that feature will become largely irrelevant if I can attack and close out two men. With one man already on the bar against a 5-point board and another waiting to join it your position was precarious indeed. Black will win a lot of gammons in this position and thus I doubled when I did to ensure I maximised my equity. Indeed it would not surprise me to learn that the original position was a drop."

"As lucid an explanation as ever," I remarked.

"How complimentary, my dear Watson."

هكذا من الأصل



Suite dreams are made of this

From Mexican modernism to surreal spas in Austria, Nonie Niesewand checks in to designer label hotels around the world

A funny little no-name book on hotel design was published in the Eighties by a subversive American graphic designer called Dan Friedman. On his whistle-stop tour of the world taking pictures of hotel bedrooms, captions identified different hotels by name – the Sheraton, Hilton, Intercontinental – with their location. Flicking over the pictures, you discover that wherever in the world you went, the outlook was the same. Wall-to-wall beige. Baghdad or Boston, Agra or Zanzibar, carpets and cupboards, bedspreads, even those horrible slatted vertical blinds were all beige. The awfulness of that downmarket penthouse suite look was carefully cloned to conquer the world.

Of course it was a marketing strategy. Nothing too bold to put off the punter whose taste and style was unknown. No colour or pattern to distract them. But it's surprising that it took so long for hotels to buy into big, bold design.

Far-flung holiday destinations were the first to cash in on the vernacular architecture to style their hotels. Exotic Zen-style temples with scented flowers floating in private pools sprang up in Bangkok. Tree houses set up showers above game watering holes in Africa. English country house hotels flowered in chintz far from the country. Yet the avant garde design movement of the mid Eighties has only

recently reached mainstream hotel chains in major cities.

Hotel Design by Otto Riewoldt shows us which ones. Individual chapters focus on designer hotels, international business hotels, resort and theme hotels and luxury hotels. At least when you check into any one of the hotels featured you won't have to worry about a room with a view.

It was Ian Schrager in New York who made designer label hotels in cities the haunt of the paparazzi when he bought the sleazy old Royalton opposite the Algonquin. He threw out the dime-slot water beds and got French designer Philippe Starck to style it. And Starck customised every fixture and fitting from the horn-shaped handles to the velvet dining chairs on moon-probe feet.

Armchair travellers should turn to page 18 of *Hotel Design* to check out the latest Schrager/Starck hotel, the all-white Delano's in Miami. It is known as the sanatorium for exhausted super models, and you don't even have to leave home to buy into the look of the pallid palatial hotel. Most things Starck designed for Delano's can be found in selected furniture stores. The washbasins styled with a round white porcelain bowl atop a table on page 21 are available at CP Hart, in London. I know, I've just bought a pair. And Viaduct furniture in London stocks high-sided, all-white linen-covered furniture that Starck designed for Delano's, made by Driade in Italy.

Now that Schrager has bought two buildings in London – the most under-bedded city in Europe – to turn into hotels with Starck, it's worth checking out his two main rivals: The Hempel, designed by Anouschka Hempel (page 34), and the Met, designed by United Designers (page 46). Or cross to Potsdam and the Art'Otel (page 42) to see how British designer Jasper Morrison's sinuous and shapely furniture looks in the lobby. You can buy his furniture at Conran's, too.

Affronted by the bronze elephants standing next to Samson-scaled columns on real elephants' feet at Sun City in South Africa (page 158) I checked out swiftly to visit Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista (page 168). Aghast at post-modernist kitsch clapboard Robert Stern collaged together like a quilt on Disney's Boardwalk, I retreated to the Mexican modernism expressed in concrete columns and cubes coloured purple, pink, crimson and yellow at the Westin Regina Los Cabos. They call it the "architectural sculpture yard" which sounds like just the place to lie down and reflect upon style trials. Just reading *Hotel Design* makes me realise that I need a holiday.

So I've picked my next dream holiday destination – the surreal Rogner-Bad Blumau spa in Austria, crowned with turrets, golden domes and battlements (page 73). Stepping inside must be like climbing into a Klimt. Truly awesome and, I suspect, awful.

'Hotel Design', by Otto Riewoldt, is published by Laurence King at £45; C.P. Hart, Newnham Terrace, Hercules Road, London SE1 (0171-902 1000).

Rogner-Bad Blumau, Austria (top);
Hyatt Regency, Japan (above left);
Ray Juan Carlos I, Barcelona (above right);
Point Hotel, Edinburgh (left)



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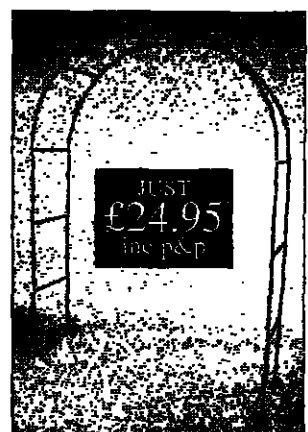
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In southern Britain there are now at least 120 privately owned forests open to visitors. Photograph: John Lawrence.

Dawn of the sylvan age

In Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, private forests are increasingly being opened to the public. Duff Hart-Davis explores a passion for woodland

If ever I owned a wood, I fear I might feel rather curmudgeonly about granting public access. If rights of way ran through the property, I should of course keep them clear, but I tend to think of forests as secret places, to be disturbed by humans as little as possible – so the question of opening the place to all and sundry would take a bit of thought.

Nevertheless, I salute the growing band of owners who make their woods available, because they provide a tremendous amount of enjoyment and instruction. This was particularly evident on Monday, when Julian and Margaret Evans held their fourth woodland open day at Northdown Plantation, their 30-acre block in Hampshire.

A professional forester all his life, Professor Evans described in his book *A Wood of Our Own* the great delight he felt when

he realised his long-term ambition by acquiring Northdown in 1983; and this week he was as infectious as ever about his private domain. No matter that he has specialised in tropical forestry and worked in 30 countries, among them Papua New Guinea and Ethiopia: in Hampshire he was on his own territory and thrilled to be welcoming 80 guests. They were a high-powered lot, and included several other professors of international repute; yet the occasion was essentially light-hearted, with plenty of children coming to learn and picnic.

A marked footpath led visitors on a tour of 12 way-points, at each of which a notice drew attention to trees or objects of particular interest. At one stop we found a simple weighing device and two short lengths of sycamore branch, one cut 18 months ago, the other two days before. The

elder piece was naturally the lighter, but everyone was surprised by the amount of water that had dried out of it: two kilos, or a fifth of its weight. "If you buy firewood in winter," said the sign, "make sure you get seasoned logs."

The excellence of the beech, now over 40 years old, gave rise to much discussion about methods of controlling grey squirrels, which, if not efficiently suppressed, destroy trees by stripping the bark. The answer at Northdown has been Warfarin-laced wheat, deployed in specially-designed hoppers which birds and other rodents cannot tap.

Further on, a notice pointed out that beefsteak fungus had stained the wood of one oak, thus creating what the trade calls "brown oak", specially valued by antique furniture restorers, who use it as a naturally aged timber. Another stop drew

attention to the remains of "Jane Austen's yew" – a tree of prodigious antiquity which fell down years ago, but which must have been known to the novelist as she drove in her horse and carriage along the lane from her village of Steventon.

The Evanses open their wood only once a year. But down in the Sussex High Weald, Chris and Anne Yarrow welcome the public to Wilderness Wood on every day of the calendar. He, too, is a professional forester and consultant, and Anne, though she originally studied geography and conservation, has picked up a rich harvest of knowledge along the way.

The Yarrowes bought the ancient 61-acre wood in 1980, and four years later moved to a house inside it, so that they live, as Anne puts it, "above the shop". The people of Hadlow Down, the nearest village, are welcome to wander around at no charge – "they

use it as their park" – but adults from further afield pay £1.90, with lower fees for pensioners, the disabled, family groups and so on.

The popularity of Wilderness Wood is proved by the numbers who come: 15,000 paying visitors a year, including 3,500 children on school excursions. The atmosphere is pleasantly relaxed: there is never anyone taking money at the entrance, and people are expected to buy tickets at the Barn, a timber-framed structure built by the Yarrowes themselves.

Apart from trails, a permanent exhibition and frequent demonstrations of woodland practices, there are numerous events, some of the most popular being the "Cast-away" days, on which children aged six-11 make primitive shelters, light camp fires and brew up sausages. One boy was so enthused that he insisted on taking his father

back to sleep in the hut he had constructed.

Somehow Mrs Yarrow has found time to edit *Exploring Woodlands in the South East*, an admirable booklet recently published by the Forestry Trust for Conservation and Education, which gives details of more than 120 woods open to visitors in Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and south London. Basic information is spiced by her own short essays on silvicultural subjects, not least the effects of the 1987 hurricane, and the whole publication reflects the satisfaction which she, her husband, the Evanses and their like derive from sharing their woods with others.

Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, Uckfield, East Sussex (01825 830509); 'Exploring Woodlands in the South East' costs £2.50 from local bookshops and tourist centres.

NATURE NOTE

Cuckoos are back in action along the hedgerows. In the south of England the traditional date for their return from Africa is 16 April; this year they were about a week late, held back in their migration by cold winds from the north, but now they are once again hard at work, wrecking the nests of songbirds with their grotesque parasitic habits.

Let nobody think the cuckoo a benign harbinger of summer. Everything about it is sinister, from its menacing, hawk-like appearance, with its big head and powerful

neck, to its steady, level flight. It is only the male which gives the familiar, two-note call: the female makes a completely different, bubbling chuckle as she settles on a particular area and searches for the nests of foster-parents – hedge sparrow, robin, meadow pipit and many others – in which to lay her eggs. Not only does she evict one of the small bird's eggs from every nest; she also lays her own on the same day, and, by some extraordinary biological mechanism, varies its colour from bluey green to red and grey, with different

amounts of speckles, so that it more or less matches those of the fosterer.

The baby cuckoo hatches in only 12 or 13 days, and, being far bigger than its companions, ejects them from the nest one by one. The foster parents work desperately to feed their one giant infant, and in only three weeks it flies away. Since a single cuckoo can lay at least 20 eggs during the summer, her destructive capacity is immense.

Duff Hart-Davis

What's on this weekend



Search for your sea-legs, check out a coracle and learn the difference between a Cat's Paw and a Lark's head at the International Wooden Boat Show. Canoes, skiffs, yachts and other watery craft from all over Europe will be shown outside the National Maritime Museum in London, alongside sailmakers and knot-tyers demonstrating their nautical skills for sailors and curious land-lubbers. The highlight of the show is an all-fresco re-enactment of the Battle of Trafalgar using a giant stage to represent HMS Victory, Lord Nelson's flagship. The admiral's bloodstained uniform can be seen on display inside the National Maritime Museum.

International Wooden Boat Show, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10. Admission £3.50, concessions £2, accompanied children free. Battle of Trafalgar and concert Sunday 31 May 2-4pm. Visitor information 081-858 4402 or 081-312 6565

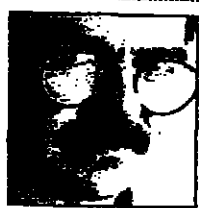
Sally Kindberg

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كنا من ألاحظ

Confession is good for the goal when late into the Lions' Den



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

ON THE SIN OF MISSING THE KICK-OFF

IT SEEMS we can't get away from confessions these days. Switch on your TV or your radio, and what do you hear? "I love my boyfriend - but I've been sleeping with his brother for the last six months... I got married in secret the day before my wedding, so the guests were watching a re-run... I'm living with my pregnant girlfriend, but I can't keep my hands off her Mum..."

Where will it all end? And what purpose does it serve? Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. Say three Hail Marys, and talk to a television researcher...

Anyway, call it exhibitionism if you like, but I don't see why I should be left out - so here is my confession. Actually, on

reflection, I don't think we'll go into that... but I am willing to talk about the time I was late for Millwall.

"Late" possibly doesn't cover it. Very late. That covers it. Embarrassingly late. Even better.

In retrospect, I can see that the whole thing stemmed from overconfidence. On the day I was due to cover an evening match at the New Den, I visited the offices of this newspaper which, as the crowd flies, are little more than a couple of miles away.

I left an hour for the journey by car. To borrow a phrase from Aqua's tune of the moment, "If I Could Turn Back Time", I would have left two hours. Three perhaps. Or per-

haps I would simply have left my car and walked.

My problem was that I had to cross the River Thames - not as the crow flew - and all routes were clogged with other motorists selfishly intent upon doing the same thing.

Blackwall Tunnel? Ha bloody ha! Rotherhithe Tunnel? Closed, as it happened, for long-term repairs. So it was Tower Bridge, then. And less than half an hour until kick-off.

Locked into a traffic jam that extended all the way down The Highway to the aforementioned crossing point, I conceived of a cunning plan. Sliding off left through relatively car-free side streets, I arrived at Wapping tube station, gateway to the South.

After parking with a flourish outside some mews flats - so easy! - I sprinted into the entrance and inquired of the man behind the glass whether New Cross Gate was the nearest station to Millwall FC. It was. And when, I asked, was the next train? "Next year."

Wapping tube station was closed due to work on the Jubilee Line.

There is a point in the John Cleese film, *Clockwise*, when the desperately late headmaster cries out in his torment: "It's not the despair. It's the hope!"

All very clever, I'm sure - but wrong. At that moment, with kick-off less than 10 minutes away, hope had left town. And despair felt very bad indeed.

As I inched across Tower

Bridge, I tried to derive some comfort from telling myself that there were still 85 minutes left to play. Then still 80 minutes. Then still 75. It wasn't comforting though. Passing New Cross Gate station, I was assailed by a sudden doubt over the exact location of the New Den, being as it was new, and not, by definition, the old Den. I stopped at a petrol station. They didn't know where the football club was; but they did give me directions to a nightclub.

I eventually parked outside some flats and ran towards the floodlights, drawing pathetic comfort from the fact that my ears were not being filled with roars of acclamation or outrage from the assembled supporters.

Then there was a problem with my pass.

By the time I had talked my way in, only two minutes - give or take injury-time - remained of the first half. Frankly, I could not face the press-box - grinning faces, "good of you to turn up" comments delivered in mocking tones, that sort of thing. I sneaked into the press lounge where two ladies were setting out the half-time sandwiches and tea, but most importantly the TV monitor in the corner of the room - oh thank you, Jesus - carried the following information in its top left corner: Millwall 0, Birmingham City 0.

I had been lucky. As the swiftest of the reporters settled to the serious business of load-

ing their plates, their conversation confirmed a lamentable lack of incident up to that point. Bad for them; good for me.

It finished 1-0 to the home side, thanks to a goal - not necessarily bad thanks anyway. Jesus - in the final minute.

My curious timing was, inevitably, commented upon, and although I toyed with the idea of saying I had been engaged in a *Day in the Life* feature which didn't necessarily require me to be in my seat, I decided honesty was the best policy.

"So where did you park?" someone asked. I told them. "Ooh," they said, with a swift intake of breath. "You didn't leave it there, did you?"

Merry makes fast change by running slowly

A British sprinter is rediscovering her form via the unorthodox training methods of Linford Christie. Mike Rowbottom met her

BEING very good, very young can create its own problems. Since setting world age bests for the 600 metres and 100m as a 14-year-old, Katharine Merry has seen her career frequently fall prey to injury. "If I had listened to some people I would have packed it up long ago," said the 23-year-old who, in her unofficial role as Britain's golden sprint prospect, attracted a succession of colour supplement writers to her family home in Dunchurch, near Rugby. "Now the thing is to come out and do the times that will make those people eat their words."

Merry seems surer of her capabilities right now than she has been for years - and for that she has to thank Linford Christie. Last October, having experienced four successive seasons in which hugely promising beginnings were followed by hugely disappointing endings, she moved to Cardiff and became installed as the only female member of Christie's training group.

After slogging through winter schedules set by the former Olympic 100m champion, and spending two months warm-weather training in Australia with Christie and the other members of her group - boyfriend Andrew Walcott, Jamie Baulch, Paul Gray and Darren Campbell - she feels stronger than ever before. The niggling back problems, and the knee injuries which have required two operations in the last couple of years, are - she hopes, she believes - things of the past. By way of demonstration, Merry opened her season recently with her first 400m race, on a windswept Welsh track in Barry, which she won in 51.7sec. As shows of strength go, it was impressive, confirming both to Merry and her coach that her preparations had been well judged.

Merry, who was previously coached by Keith Antoine, ad-

mits she was taking a back by some of the training methods Christie employs. Specifically, she was surprised by how slowly she was expected to run for much of the time. But this, as she soon discovered, was an essential part of the Christie approach, something which had been handed down by his own long-time coach, Ron Roddan.

"It's no good running your heart out in December and January when it's the summer that matters," Merry said.

"Throughout the winter Linford got all of us running at an even pace, concentrating on tempo, with the odd speed session thrown in. It's not as in-

'I was running so quickly then. I don't know how I did it. But when you are young, you can do everything'

tense as the work I did previously and it suits me to a tee considering my history of injuries."

So steady was the pace, indeed, that Merry was able to run comfortably alongside her male training partners. "It has benefited me a lot," she said. "I feel a lot stronger now. The last few seasons have been very frustrating because I have begun each one by setting a personal best and ended each one with injuries. When it happened again last year, that was the final straw. I just felt I needed to make a fresh start."

Merry talks like a veteran and, indeed, it seems as if she has been around for a long time. But that, as she points out, is be-

cause she became so well known so young. Her early achievements have proved a hard act to follow. Apart from anything else it took her nearly five years to better the time of 7.35sec she had set for the 60m.

"I was running so quickly then," she said. "I don't know how I did it. But when you are young, you can do everything..."

She does not accept, however, that her precocity has worked against her. "Everything happens for a reason," she said. "But now I feel as if I am starting again."

The 200m, in which she set a personal best of 22.77sec last season, will be the main focus of her attention. She plans to earn selection as Britain's representative in the European Cup at the end of next month. Thereafter comes the European Championships and the Commonwealth Games.

"It's exciting," she said. "Things are going so well at the moment that I can't wait for my races."

Merry and her training colleagues are being supported this season by someone whom she describes as being "from a different planet" - medical therapist John Sales. "I've seen so many medical people over the years that when we were recommended to see this person I thought 'Oh yes? Well, let's have a look...' But he's been brilliant. He works to the Chinese pattern of points on the body which correspond to other parts. He doesn't use acupuncture, he applies pressure. For instance, there is a point on my ear which corresponds to my knees... It sounds odd, but he's got me through from October to now and I've only had to miss two training sessions."

Success is beckoning once again to an athlete who has suffered from having too much, too soon.



After a remarkable entrance into athletics Katharine Merry has suffered from a series of injuries Photograph: Allsport

Reid keeps Chinese at bay

Hockey

By Bill Colwill
in Utrecht

ENGLAND will this evening play Scotland for 9/10th place in the World Cup here, following their wins in yesterday's cross-over games.

Two goals from Jane Sixsmith and one from Purdy Miller were enough to ensure a 3-0 victory over China in a game in which England took their chances and the Chinese, who created far more opportunities, came up against Carolyn Reid in the English goal.

England, with Karen Brown moving forward at the faintest of excuses, created a number of chances in the opening minutes including two penalty corners, but it was a careless clearance from China's Seon Hwa Lee in the 14th minute that paved the way for the opening goal. Her clearance was intercepted by Jane Smith, who put Sixsmith away for the kill.

After a series of outstanding saves by Reid, England increased their lead five minutes before the interval at their third penalty corner, Miller deflecting the ball into the net after a clever switch. Sixsmith, with her second goal in the 22nd minute, put the game beyond doubt.

Scotland conceded an early goal against India before winning 5-3 in a game in which they had the edge with the front running of Sue MacDonald and Rhona Simpson proving too much.

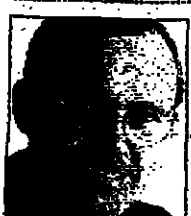
Both scored, along with the captain Pauline Robertson, who dominated the midfield. Scotland's first goal came from Susan Gilmour, with Alison Grant completing the scoring.

Canada will be without their veteran defender Alan Brahm when they play England this morning. He has been suspended for unsportsmanlike behaviour.

ENGLAND: C Reid (Highdown); J Simpson (Canterbury); K Brown (Scough); M Clewlow (Canterbury); J Smith (Lancaster); J Wright (Ottum); K Bowden (capt, Lancaster); J Simpson (Loughborough Students); J Sixsmith (Sutton Coldfield); P Miller (Lancaster); J Smith (Scough). Substitutes used: S Baines (Lancaster); L Copeland (Scough); K Moore (Ottum); F Greenham (Ottum).
SCOTLAND: T Riebel (Glasgow Western); V Neil (Edinburgh); S Fraser (Bonnyrigg Green); F Pearson (Edinburgh); C Corcoran (Edinburgh); H Walker (Glasgow Western); D Hamilton (Edinburgh); L Burton (Edinburgh); P Robertson (capt, Bonnyrigg Green); S MacDonald (Scough); R Simpson (Edinburgh). Substitutes used: A Davidson (Glasgow Western); A Grant (Edinburgh); S Gilmour (HGC Netherlands).

Results, Digest, page 23

An insultingly lowbrow formula in a breakneck parade of meaningless soundbites



CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV

ITV DOCUMENTARIES are atrocious by and large, the on-screen equivalent of some trashy old free sheet shoved through your letterbox. *The Truth About Footballers* certainly maintained standards with its insultingly lowbrow formula of finding out what a bunch of minor celebrities think about the game, in a breakneck parade of mostly meaningless soundbites.

One of the first topics up for discussion was the burning issue of whether players should have sex before a match, which gives you some idea of the agenda. And when one of the celebs actually said, seconds into the programme, that "football is the new rock 'n' roll", it was nearly switch-off time there and then. With its hint at behind-the-scenes exposés, the title was dis-

gracefully misleading, the biggest (and most disturbing) revelation being that Uri Geller is on England's side for the World Cup. "I held it in my hands," he enigmatised it for England, "he said of the trophy. 'I even twisted it, just a little bit to the right.'"

The utensil-mangling crackpot even took credit for Scotland's penalty miss against England in *Euro 96*. In a helicopter overhead as Gary McAllister shaped up to take the kick, he concentrated on the ball, he says, just enough to make it wobble on the spot. The final proof that he's a few bent spoons short of a cutlery drawer was when he asserted that in 10 years' time, psychologists and "people like me" will be sitting on the bench with the manag-

er. Psychologists, possibly. People like Geller (are there any people like Geller?), never. As one of the "personalities", the lottery host Patrick Kielty, observed, the Israeli's attachment to Reading was not quite enough to prevent them finishing bottom of the First Division earlier this month.

The fundamental weakness with *The Truth...* was the notion that what some B-list bozo has to say about football - about anything - is interesting. So, for example, Eamonn Holmes expatiated on players' wages, Angus Deayton on violence on the pitch and Matthew Lorenzo on life after retirement. Hardly a think tank at work there (Chris Evans, irritatingly, was easily the best informed, but then he appears to have got

drunk with most Premiership players at one time or another).

There were some good lines, like Mark Radcliffe's belief that when they stop playing, "all footballers should go fat and bald and open a pub on the Wirral". And there were one or two fab cameos, particularly Lauren and Leah, who put on their gladiatorial rags and head off to Charlie Chan's night-club every weekend in pursuit of big game. "My whole outfit," said Lauren as she held up a pink rubber creation designed to bring the entire West Ham back four to its knees begging for mercy. Leah had been offered money by a red-top to seduce Rio Ferdinand but has eyes only for Frankie Lampard - "he's gorgeous," she sighed.

There was a modicum of

heavy breathing, too, in *My Summer With Des* (BBC1), Arthur Smith's film created in the image of his own *An Evening With Gary Lineker*, a slight, charming tale about a love affair between Martin (Neil Morrissey) and the magical Rosie, played by the magical Rachel Weiss.

There was a feeling at the beginning of "not another play about football with a famous name in the title", but the engaging Morrissey captured the nuances of being a football fan during a major tournament - the way most other aspects of human existence cease to exist. "Unfortunately, someone had the stupid idea of putting gaps between games," he said.

The story was intercut with scenes from the BBC's coverage that commented wittily on the

main plot, Des and Co being the Greek chorus as the progress of the love affair mirrored England's through the tournament. Martin and Rosie watched the Dutch game with mounting excitement, orgasming simultaneously as the fourth goal went in. And you just knew that, as they sat at Wembley during the shoot-out against Germany and Southgate's effort went over the bar, he was going to turn and find her gone.

It would take Rosie's magical powers to get Martin into *France 98*, if *Dispatches: Superstuous* (Channel 4) has it right. Callum Macrae, wearing his best Roger Cook suit, doordstepped his way through one English touting operation that handled more tickets than the Football Association's entire

allocation for England games - and all of them, despite the touts' best assurances, unauthorised and therefore useless.

The most enjoyable scene came at the end, when Macrae bearded the boys in the lobby of the Paris Hilton as they had a drink-up to celebrate a lucrative week. As he entered with his camera crew, they all scarpereed sharply, the lobby emptying like a Wild West saloon when Jack Palance walks in. One man stayed, though, the head of the operation, David Spanton. Predictably, he had come across as a piece of low life, but he dealt with Macrae perfectly politely, and even shook his hand at the end, asking when the programme was going out. I hate to say it, but he seemed like quite a nice bloke.

Crisford awake to his good fortune in dream job

AS he informed his jockey, Frankie Dettori, and the British press of Cape Verdi's participation in the Derby last Wednesday afternoon Simon Crisford conducted affairs from a presidential desk in an enormous office. It was the sort of space people in London are liable to call a flat.

This setting is quite appropriate, most would say, for the racing manager of the blue chip Godolphin operation. When you see Simon Crisford at the races, in his shades and blazer, the thought always occurs that there must be a yacht around. You imagine him travelling the globe first class at Sheikh Mohammed's expense, entering cars with pennants on the bonnet and pausing just long enough to collect an immense salary.

It appears a tremendous job, even if this description is not one which Crisford himself recognises. He doesn't quite see his posting as a sinecure. "That's complete nonsense," he says. "The job requires a lot of hard work and complete dedication, and there's nothing romantic about the whole thing. There's nothing fancy about it and if people think otherwise, it's a complete misrepresentation."

"I think people had that image of people who worked for the Sheikhs 10 or 15 years ago. But nowadays there's no time for the sort of lifestyle that some people might expect. That does not exist." It sounds a bit like being a poor old journalist.

And the racing manager knows what that is like. He's been in the media swamp with the rest of us.

Crisford is 36 years old and comes from Solihull, though his accent was born somewhere else. From the age of nine he was bankers about racing and by 12 he was climbing into the Goodwood cycle to get tips on commenting from Peter O'Sullivan.

He's done that got bored in the City thing and subsequently worked for John Dunlop and Sir Mark Prescott. After that he was Newmarket corre-

Richard Edmondson talks to the man with the perfect position, racing manager to Sheikh Mohammed's Godolphin team

spondent for the *Racing Post*, which gives him an insight into the dribbling beasts who approach him after another dribbling beast has won for Godolphin.

There is little doubt that Crisford is the Arab's racing manager most liked by his former colleagues, but then he hasn't got much to beat. Anthony Stroud (Sheikh Mohammed), Angus Gold (Sheikh Hamdan) and Grant Pritchard-Gordon (Khalid Abdullah) are the other notable ministers of non-information and the last named has found keeping his lips zipped so tiresome that he is to retire at the end of the year.

If you say good morning to some of these guys you sometimes need a bunch of heavies and a live flex to illicit a reaction. Crisford has had his "no comment but don't quote me on that" moments himself, but has matured into the most eloquent figure in his trade. He knows the little tricks that make journalists appreciate him. He returns telephone calls and, occasionally, throws an unsolicited fatty bone of information to the pack.

Crisford says he's very lucky and that in every throw in life "the dice has turned up six for me". That may be so, but on many occasions he has also loaded them in his favour. He is hardworking, effective and shrewd.

Stroud surely noted this when he first inducted Crisford into the Maktoum operation as his No. 2. What he probably did not anticipate was that Sheikh Mohammed would soon make the substitute his superior.

Five years ago, the Sheikh thought it would be a splendid idea to winter some choice two-year-olds in Dubai and then return them for an assault on the finest races in Europe. He knew he had a man to oversee the job. "When Godolphin was born it all happened very quickly," Crisford says. "One day Sheikh Mohammed told me to come to Dubai and I went with a suitcase for the weekend. Three weeks later I was phoning my wife, telling her to take the children out of school and join me out there."

Karen Crisford first met her husband during Goodwood week in an HMV music shop in Brighton. He went in looking for a single and came out with a couple, and the family, which spreads to a son and daughter, now spends six months in both England and Dubai each year.

Godolphin has prospered from the outset, the choice troops collecting 25 Group One races, including eight European Classics, six of them domestic ones. Simon Crisford has looked relaxed and sunny and ready for cocktails back on the poop deck after each of them, but inside other thoughts have been burning away. "When you get those lucky breaks like I have you've got to take them," he says. "And it's all very well and good taking them, but then you've got to keep your position because there are plenty of other people out there just as good as me snapping at my heels. It's very easy to fall down that slippery pole, and a lot of people who do that never get up again."

Next Saturday afternoon it might be time for an uncommon, good, lively party. If Cape Verdi does win the Derby, you will see Simon Crisford passing on his thoughts to the press smilingly while looking vaguely nautical. He might then do something seemingly out of character. "I'd love to have some jellied eels," he says. "You can't get them in Dubai."

If you had a dirham for every time Crisford mentions the team thing, then you could give Sheikh Mohammed a run for his money. He likes to credit the other main man who runs Godolphin, Tom Albertrani, the American assistant trainer, and Saeed Bin Suroor, the nominated trainer. Bin Suroor is probably the most successful trainer of modern times, even though many believe his role is not much more than carrying a tray bearing the soda siphon. "They're very young to think that," Crisford says, "very wrong, very inaccurate and very unfair."

Sheikh Mohammed's influence, however, is not in any doubt. The owner and Frankie Dettori become knotted together in such rapture after a momentous victory that the temptation is to throw a bucket of water over them. It seems, though, that the relationship with his trusted lieutenant is not quite the same. "It's employer and employee. It's as simple as that," Crisford says. "With the type of investment and backing he has put into Godolphin the results have to be there. As a team we knuckle down and work very hard and nothing less than complete dedication is acceptable."

"We're hard on ourselves because coming second is no good. There is nothing good about coming second in anything in life. And racing is ruthlessly competitive."

"We do discuss things and argue with the Sheikhs and we thrash things out. Of course Sheikh Mohammed and Sheikh Maktoum have the final say, but they are keen to listen to our opinions and they want a good, lively discussion."

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Crisford: 'There are plenty of people out there just as good as me snapping at my heels' Photograph: Robert Hallan

Croco Rouge can be the Chantilly ace

By Greg Wood

MUCH to the delight of the sad and the desperate, an astonishing find of 22 horse races will find their way into the nation's living rooms over the course of this afternoon and evening (assuming, of course, that they are connected to Murdochvision). It is the main event on tomorrow's agenda in France, however, which will attract the attention of purists, whether they are students of form or architecture, as 13 colts contest the Prix du Jockey Club in the magnificent setting of Chantilly.

There is a tendency among some British punters to see the French Derby as little more than an interesting appetiser for the serious business at Epsom, but in the last two years at least, such patriotism has proved sadly misplaced. Both Hellisio, in 1996, and Peintre Celebre, last year's winner, went on to win the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe and mark themselves down as exceptional colts. It is hard to say the same of either Shamit or Benny The Dip, the winners at Epsom in those years.

This year, what is more, there may be a direct line of form to link the French and English Derby winners at an unusually early stage of the season. Saratoga Springs, winner of the Dante Stakes at York this month, is the most formidable member of a three-strong foreign challenge for tomorrow's Classic, and at this stage is also an intended runner in the original Derby next Saturday. If he does indeed make it to Epsom, he is the probable mount of Pat Eddery, although Mick Kinane, his rider yesterday, made it clear yesterday that he will not decide on his own preference among Aidan O'Brien's extensive team until next week.

Saratoga Springs put up a resolute performance to win the Dante, but it hardly carried the stamp of irresistible brilliance, and he may struggle to cope with the best of the French

colts. Chief among them is Croco Rouge (3.20), who won the Group One Prix Lupin at Longchamp. A repeat of that form should be good enough.

The quantity of televised racing in Britain today is not, somewhat predictably, matched by its quality, and the Coral Sprint Handicap at Newmarket is a race which will suck in many thousands of punters and then spit most of them out again.

One consolation is that several of the more obvious choices contested the same race at Lingfield three weeks ago, when Hill Magic came with a strong finish to beat 19 opponents, including Nuclear De-

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Nuclear Debate (Newmarket 3.40)
NB: Teeton Mill (Stratford 4.30)

bate, Night Shot and Harmonic Way. The message of that form, however, is that there will again be little to choose between them, and it may pay instead to look further down the list. Magic Rainbow (3.40) is a tentative choice, but he has solid excuses for his last two disappointing runs on turf and had previously appeared to show improvement when winning on the all-weather. At 20-1 with Ladbrokes this morning, he is at least a sporting price.

Another who could go well at decent odds is MUGELLO (nap 3.10), who carries top-weight in the five-furlong handicap but should be suited by the return to the minimum trip. Desert Lady (next best 4.15) is also improving, while at Stratford, Venetia Williams can win the Horse & Hound Cup for the second year running. Teeton Mill (4.30) is her runner in the main event on the final day of the 1997-98 National Hunt season. The punters will not get much of a holiday, however. The new campaign starts at Hereford on Monday.

Yesterday's results, page 23

Musselburgh

HYPERION

6.40 Red Symphony 7.10 Golden Thunderbolt
7.40 Soaked 8.10 Northern Mottos 8.40 Double Power 9.10 Feet A Line

GOING: Good.
STALLS: Straight course - far side; round course - inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low for 5th; high from 7th to 11th.
① Right-hand oval course with right turns.
② Course is 5m. 5.2 of Edinburgh on A1. Bus link from Edinburgh station 5m. ADMISSON: Club £2; £2.50 (10-15) (16-21) and unemployed £3. Accompanied under-16s free. CAR PARK: Free.
③ LEADING TRAINERS: J. B. Stanger 12-13 (20.9%), M. Johnston 12-13 (14.3%), M. Johnston 12-13 (14.3%), T. Stanger 12-13 (14.3%).
④ LEADING JOCKEYS: J. Channon 12-13 (20.9%), A. Cullen 12-13 (14.3%), J. F. Egan 12-13 (14.3%), P. Foy 12-13 (14.3%).
⑤ FAVOURITES: 12-13 (20.9%), 12-13 (14.3%).
⑥ BLINKERS FIRST TIME: Phantom Thoroughbred (8.40, Majel) (7.0, veteran), Teacher (8.0, veteran), Dyer (8.4), Finlay (8.0, veteran).
⑦ LONG DISTANCE TRAVELLERS: Selling Barons & Best Sunday (8.40) over 400 miles.

6.40 JAMBO'S SELLING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,000 2YO 5f
1. 20 DALLINGHAM BARRON (4) W. G. Turner 8.11. D. McCallum 11.8
2. LATE NIGHT LAD (1) J. O'Neill 8.11. W. S. 11.8
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4. LATE NIGHT LAD (1) J. O'Neill 8.11. W. S. 11.8

4. 402 RED SYMPHONY (4) J. Barry 8.11. P. Foy 11.8
5. 000 ARISMA (1) N. Tinker 8.6. Kim Tinker 8.6
6. 000 JAYCEE SUPERSTAR (12) P. Foy 8.6. P. Foy 8.6
7. 505 JUST SUNDAY (17) W. G. Turner 8.6. A. McCallum 11.8
8. 000 PHANTOM THUNDER (8) W. G. Turner 8.6. P. Foy 11.8
9. 000 WIND IN WHIRLWIND (11) J. Warrington 8.6. L. Newton 7.0

BETTING: 4-1 Red Symphony, 7-2 Just Sunday, 4-1 Arisima, 10-1 Late Night Lad, 12-1 Blazing Flame, Jaycee Superstar, 14-1 others.
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True weights: Sunday Mail 7st 5lb, Ready Teddy 7st 5lb.
BETTING: 5-2 Soaked, 4-1 Gamrock Valley, 13-2 Killy, Young Best, 7-1 Young Lion, Pailin, 4-1 Sunday Mail 7st 5lb, 20-1 others.

7.10 SHERATON CLAIMING STAKES (F) £3,000 1m 4f
1. 303-4 GOLDEN THUNDERBOLT (18) N. Tinker 5.9. D. McCallum 4.2
2. 04-40 BRECKON (15) D. P. McCallum 5.9. D. McCallum 4.2
3. 02-55 DURHAM PRINCE (12) D. P. McCallum 5.9. D. McCallum 4.2
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The point of it all is a rural kind of thing

By Ian Davies

FOXES don't just kill themselves, you know. All that bepinked charging across the countryside has to be paid for and, from January to June, hunts up and down Britain hold point-to-points - steeplechase meetings - as fundraisers.

The origin of steeplechasing is, as the title implies, a race across country between two church steeples, jumping all obstacles along the way.

Going to a point-to-point is quite similar to going to a normal race meeting except it is much less expensive and often a lot more fun.

Although point-to-points can charge you, say, £10 to park your car in the field the meeting is taking place in and another £5 for each occupant - there is little they can do to prevent pedestrians from walking in for nothing.

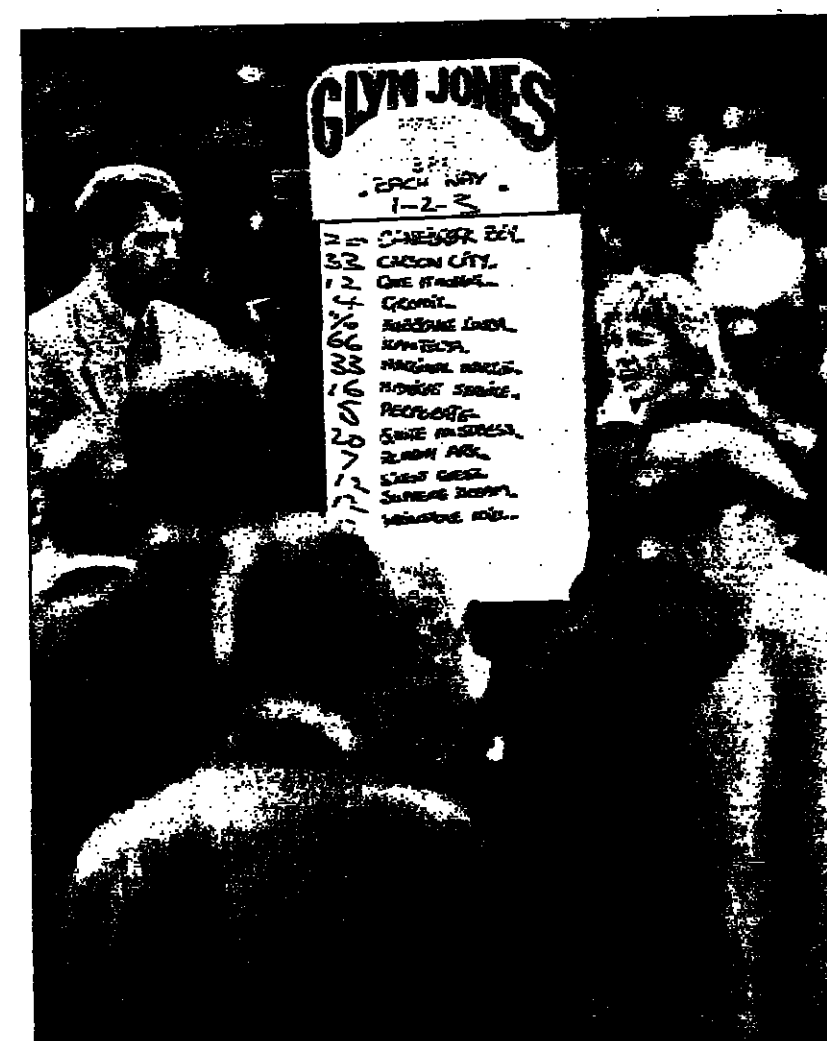
The Melton Hunt Club meeting at Garthorpe in Leicestershire is the point-to-point world's Cheltenham Festival and last Saturday the cream of the hunter chasers thrashed it out for various championship races.

Bookmakers at point-to-points are notorious for making scandalously over-round books - that's racing jargon for offering really mean odds about everything - but even so the form is as reliable at a point-to-point as at any horse race meeting (i.e. not very).

It is quite possible to back a few winners by trusting to common sense and the handy hints that can be obtained from buying a race card, which invariably contains a useful form guide.

It's an ideal nursery for introducing young horses to racing and young humans to watching them race. It is also a useful pre-retirement home for decent chasers of yesteryear. And, for those townies seeking that rural weekend fix, the countryside, and many of its fiercest defenders, is there in all its splendour.

● Copies of these photographs - and others by *The Independent's* sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam - can be ordered by telephoning 0171-293-2534.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT HALLAM

Motorcycling
Hail
leger
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Motorcycling
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Honda

Honda

Players

Players

Under par

Under par

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Motorcycling: As the Isle of Man prepares for the annual TT, Mac McDiarmid marks the 20th anniversary of an extraordinary victory

Hail to the legend of Hailwood

I CAN'T tell you where I was or what I was doing when President Kennedy died, and I'm already hazy about Lady Di. But, like a generation of motorcycle fans, I remember these things vividly about the day our legend died: 23 March 1981 was the day Stanley Michael Bailey Hailwood – decorated for bravery by the Queen and survivor of countless races on two wheels and four – died after a road accident on the way home from the chip shop. Greatness should not end this way...

It will be 20 years next week since Mike Hailwood's most celebrated achievement. In 1978 he emerged, rusty and unfancied, from 11 years of retirement and took an equally unfancied Italian Ducati motorcycle to victory in the toughest race in the world. The man was already a legend, on the Isle of Man on 3 June 1978 he became a god. The TT was billed that year as the return of "Mike the Bike". Hailwood's first Isle of Man TT had been precisely 20 years before, when he had finished a startling third in the 250cc event. Fittingly, 1998 also marks the 50th birthday celebrations of Honda, for in 1961 Hailwood gave both himself and Honda their maiden TT victories in the 125cc and 250cc events. For good measure he brought a Norton home first in the Senior TT – then the British Grand Prix – to become the first man to win three races in one week, a feat only exceeded, by Phil McCallen, in 1996.

His status as a racing great

already assured, Hailwood went on to notch up a further nine TT wins and 10 world titles before retiring from two-wheel racing in 1987. What was more remarkable was the public affection which greeted his success. Motorcycle racing was essentially a working-class sport, yet here was a public schoolboy, the son of an Oxfordshire millionaire, whom they openly



Hailwood: 'Perfect natural'

revered. Not only did racing hardware come easily to Hailwood – his father's luck saw that – but the act of racing did, too. His style was consummate. Everything he did had an aura of Corinthian grace.

Yet although he cultivated an image of the "perfect natural", many of his contemporaries will tell you how hard he grafted on the details; and what a tough customer he was on the track. Even when he abandoned two

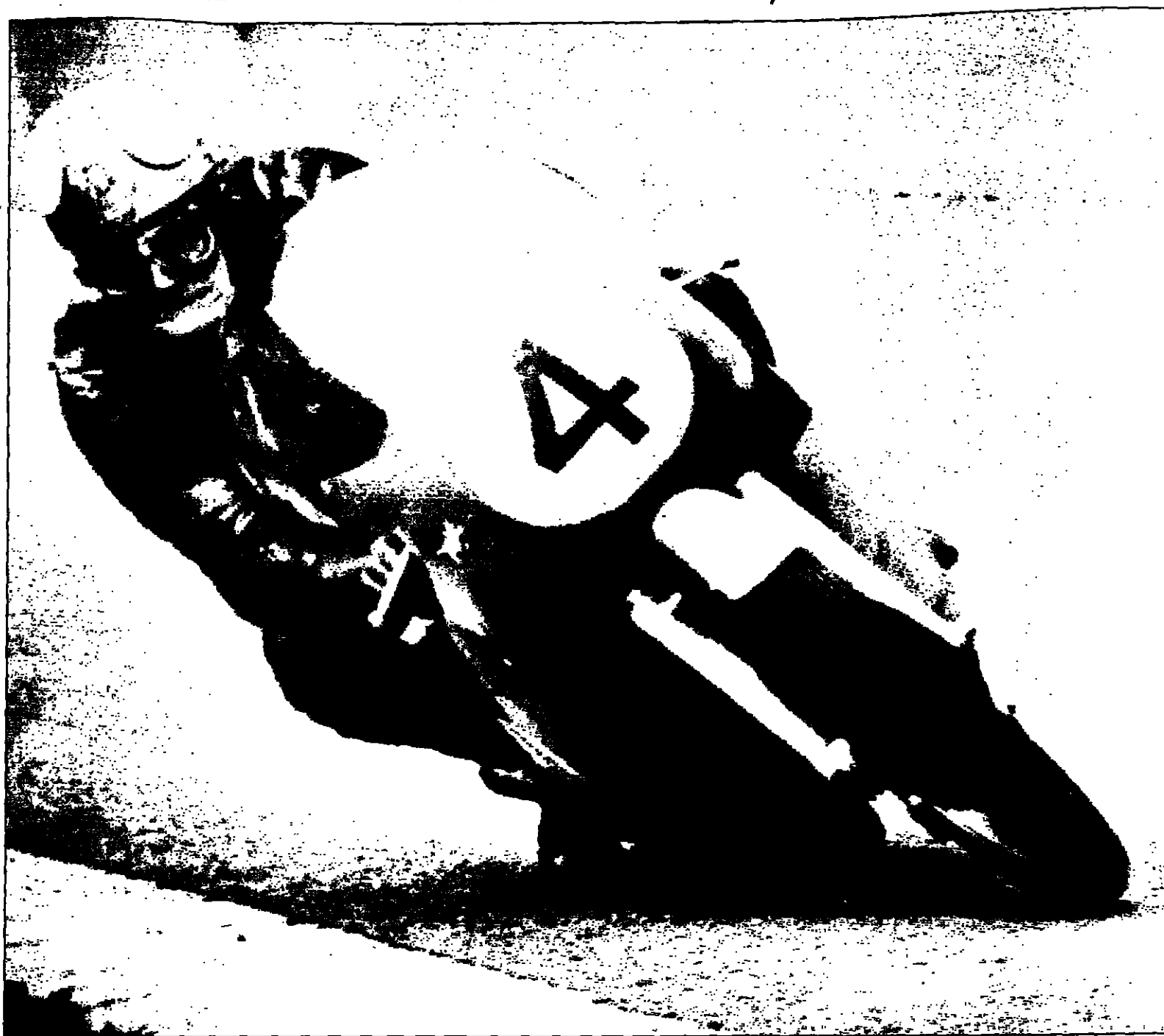
wheels for four, his former fans adored him. In Formula One car racing, his best result was a second at Monza in 1971, and he never quite had the talent to equal John Surtees' feat of world titles on motorcycles and cars. But as well as dignity, he showed rare courage.

In 1973 in South Africa he hauled Clay Reggazoni out of a blazing Ferrari as marshals stood by impotently, a feat which earned him the George Medal. Only a few months later his own car-racing career was shattered when he crashed his McLaren at the Nürburgring, seriously damaging a leg.

It was this half-crippled, building has-been who, at the age of 38, had the temerity to return to the Isle of Man. The Formula One TT was the first event of the week, held in glorious weather before record-breaking crowds.

If there was a god in heaven, there could surely only be one winner. Honda, piquantly, had other ideas and their rider, Phil Read, would be Mike the Bike's main rival over six laps of the 37.73-mile course.

Read was a contemporary of Hailwood's, a multi-world champion himself, and working-class to boot. Yet he was never held in the same esteem. Worse still was his denunciation of the "unsafe" Manx races, a position he recanted when the financial incentive became worthwhile. To TT fans, Read was the traitor to Hailwood's patriot. Some even threw rocks at him on his way to winning the 1977 race.



Mike Hailwood in his heyday as a working-class hero despite being a public schoolboy and the son of a millionaire

Photograph: Allsport/Hulton Getty

Read started the race 50 seconds ahead of Hailwood. After two laps the pair were level on the road. Hailwood smashed the class lap record, while Read's bike blew up trying to match the pace. As Hailwood cruised to victory his Ducati's engine self-destructed as it crossed the

winning line. It could not have managed another mile.

The fairy-story's other dimension was that little Ducati had trounced mighty Honda. Indeed, Hailwood only agreed to ride the Italian V-twin after Honda had denounced him as "over the hill" and declined to

supply machinery. The Hailwood Duke was the ultimate shoestring racer, created almost single-handedly by Steve Wynne, a Manchester motorcycle dealer.

Hailwood returned to the TT to win the Senior event in 1979, then hung up his racing leathers

for good. With over two decades of dicing with death behind him, he ought to have had a long and leisurely retirement ahead. Yet within two years he was dead – killed, along with his daughter, Michelle, driving home from the local chippy. A lorry had done what the Isle of Man

never could, and quenched the legendary flame. The final irony in an implausible story comes on Monday week when the Ducati ridden by Hailwood will thunder once more around the Isle of Man in the Classic Parade. The rider? Who else but Mike's once arch rival, Phil Read.

Honda expects to celebrate anniversary in style

ON MONDAY, one of the most glorious anachronisms in world sport thunders into life for its annual festival of noise and speed. Around 600 riders will take part, completing over 150,000 racing and practice miles, writes Mac McDiarmid.

They will pilot 150 horsepower machines between houses and hedges at speeds of up to 190mph. It is thrilling and dangerous.

This year the injury roll call began early, with a trio of top Irish contenders likely to be ab-

sent when practice gets underway. Joey Dunlop, 22 times a TT winner, broke his left hand and collarbone, cracked his pelvis and lost a finger crashing out of the Tandragee 100 races in May.

Two weeks later his younger brother, Robert, broke his fibula at the North-West 200 road races. Meanwhile, on 4 May, 11 times TT winner and hot favourite Phil McCallen damaged three vertebrae in a crash at Thruxton, Hants.

All three await last-minute

medical tests, with Robert Dunlop probably the most likely to be passed fit.

If we can not be quite sure who will be riding, it is easier to predict which machinery will win. This year marks Honda's 50th anniversary. The Japanese giant has chosen the Isle of Man, where it first made its mark on world racing in 1959, as the focus of its celebrations. The party includes a glittering parade of past Honda stars, many on classic factory racing machinery. Amongst the riders

are Jim Redman, Freddie Spencer, Luigi Taveri, Steve Hislop and Mick Grant.

To ensure that race results do not impair their party, Honda has recruited almost every racer of note in the major classes. The loss of McCallen and Joey Dunlop is less of a blow with former TT winners Ian Simpson and Jim Moodie ready to take up the baton for honours in the blue riband Formula 1 and Senior races. The Scots ride a RC45 V-four and NSR500 two-stroke respectively, and will

surely challenge for honours. Simpson will also be hot favourite in the 600cc Junior race.

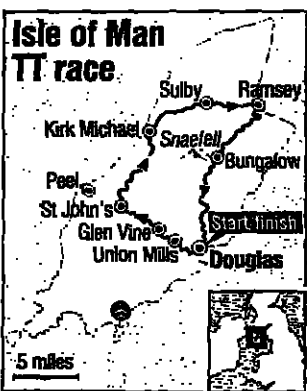
Less a TT veteran, but widely tipped for his first win is Michael Rutter, son of former TT ace Tony. The 24-year-old has served his TT apprenticeship well. In last year's Senior he led McCallen, the man to beat, before sliding off. Rutter also rides a Honda RC45.

Simon Beck and Marc Flynn are two of the rare contenders not to be riding Hondas

this year. Beck has lapped the island at close to 123mph, and rides Kawasaki in both the Formula 1, Senior and Production races. Flynn flies Suzuki colours.

Honda dominance – last year they took 44 of 60 top 10 places in the major solo events – could be most at risk in the Production event.

Reintroduced in 1996, the race is the world's showcase for sports roadsters. So far, Honda's Fireblade has had things all its own way.



Race programme

Monday 1 June to Friday 5 June: Practice.
Saturday 6 June: 1.00pm: Formula 1 TT (6 laps) (Honda lap of honour follows F1 race) 5.00pm: Sidecar race A (3 laps) 1.15pm: Sidecar race B (3 laps) 1.15pm: Classic parade lap.
Wednesday 10 June: 10.45am: Ultra-Lightweight TT (25cc) and Single Cylinder TT (4 laps) 1.15pm: Junior TT (600cc) (4 laps)
Friday 12 June: 10.45am: Production TT (3 laps) 1.15pm: Senior TT (8 laps)

Players make hay as sun shines

Golf

THE ONLY one of the last nine major championship winners not under par after the first day of the Memorial Tournament was Mark O'Meara – and he was not competing.

PGA Championship winner Davis Love III was tied for the lead with Steve Pate, Trevor Dodds and Joey Sindelar after shooting a six-under-par 66 on Thursday on a firm and fast Muirfield Village layout.

But while players went low in the first round, no one separated from the field as 19 players were bunched within two strokes at the top of the leaderboard. US Open champion Ernie Els was among seven players in at 67. Steve Jones, Tom Lehman and Mark Brooks, who won the US Open, the Open and the PGA in 1996, were two strokes back at 68.

Last year's Open winner,

Justin Leonard, was in with a 69 and 1997 Masters champion Tiger Woods had a 70. O'Meara, the winner of this year's Masters, is playing in Germany this week. Even Nick Faldo, who has struggled since winning the 1996 Masters, got in under par with a 71.

"It's amazing, the scores," Love said, after he tested his sore back for the first time in four weeks and made five birdies in seven holes to surge to the top of the leaderboard. "The greens are perfect, the fairways are perfect, the course played a little shorter than it has in the past," Love said.

The reason the course played shorter was because the soggy sounds familiar to the Memorial Tournament in the past were gone. After rain that delayed, interrupted or cancelled 13 of the possible 36 rounds over the last nine years, the 23rd Memorial opened beneath bright sunshine, presenting the players with a new set of challenges on an extremely fast course.

Among those rising to the occasion were Els, who usually starts playing well about this time of the year.

"You got to be careful out there," Els said about the Jack Nicklaus-designed Muirfield course. "I played with Freddy [Couples] today and we hit so many three woods. You have to keep the ball in play."

While players were hitting eight and nine irons onto greens instead of the five and six irons needed last year, the Muirfield layout required more thought. Instead of just swinging with the driver and tackling saturated greens, players used irons off the tee to fairways that were running fast and they needed the patience to play approaches away from pins that were, in spots, too firm to go after.

Woods got off to a fast start and was three under par after

he made an eagle on the par-five fifth hole but slumped to finish on 70, while Nicklaus shot a 74 and was eight strokes off the lead in the tournament he started.

Vijay Singh, who prospered in last year's rain-shortened 54-hole to take the title – a three-wood from the soggy 11th fairway to within inches of the hole for an eagle proving to be the key shot, had a 73 on Thursday. But this was not a soggy Muirfield for the first round.

"It's playing differently than it has for years," Stewart said after a round in which he missed only one fairway on his way to three birdies and an eagle.

With no detrimental weather bearing down on central Ohio, it just might be that Muirfield will play the way Nicklaus designed it for the entire four days. And that could make for the kind of tournament this course has not seen in years.

Goodison's chance to stand out

Sailing

By Stuart Alexander in Medemblik, Netherlands

THE absence of Olympic silver medalist Ben Ainslie has allowed the precocious talents of Paul Goodison, a 20-year-old student at Southampton Institute, free rein in the Laser singlehander for the second consecutive day of the Spa regatta here yesterday.

As the forecasters predicted up to 25 knots only for a second day of light and shifty air to materialise, Goodison continued to exploit a love of the light conditions which has had his coaches demanding he put on weight and fitness to cope with a wider range of wind strengths.

After seven races, Goodison, who led at the end of the first day, was still second overall, one point and one place ahead of Olympic gold medalist and double world champion, Robert Scheidt of Brazil.

Needing a top five place to-day in what may be the final race before the cut to the top 12 for the match racing, Andy Beadsworth, with crew Chris Mason and Barry Parkin need both the match race final practice and the opportunity to work on boat speed, especially downwind.

In the Star class Glyn Charles and new crew Mark Covell are holding their own at sixth, but Europe singlehander Shirley Robertson moves into the gold fleet with it all to do in the final four races.

Grubor ready to grab his chance in Redgrave's four

Rowing

By Hugh Matheson in Munich

THE British rowing team, which finished second overall last year, has sent its strongest line-up of boats to contest all of the 14 Olympic events in the first of the three Krombacher World Cup regattas here this weekend.

Steve Redgrave returns for his 18th senior season, once again in the coxless four which won the inaugural World Cup in 1977.

Two weeks ago Tim Foster, a founder member of the unbeaten four, was forced to stop rowing after putting his hand through a plate glass window at a party. He has been replaced by Luka Grubor who obtained British citizenship recently after becoming the first Croatian to row for Oxford when he was picked for the 1997 Boat Race.

Since leaving Oxford last summer he has been training at Leander Club in Henley, alongside the four. It is a notable vote of confidence by Redgrave and his colleagues in the four, Matt

Pinsent and James Cracknell, to pick Grubor who finished ninth in the coxless pairs trials in April, but who did well in seat races at the Docks earlier this month.

Other more senior oarsmen are scattered through the crews established at the beginning of May and were left alone, to avoid disruption, while Grubor makes his mark. They will face two Croatian fours, but the strongest challenge is likely to come from the Romanian crew which finished third in the world last year.

The best of the rest of the men's team are in the eight coached, as in 1997 when they finished fourth, by Martin MacIlroy. They will race five crews from last year's championship final and have several changes including last year's coxless pair, Ben Hunt Davis and Bobby Thatcher, as well as the 1997 bronze medalists, Ed Coode and Stephen Trapmore. They are joined by Andrew Lindsay, who finished third in the pairs trials a week after losing the Boat Race with Oxford. The World Cup, now in its

second year and fully sponsored, has pulled all the top international crews into one three-regatta series in the European summer season. In the past, team managers played cat and mouse looking for the right level of preparation and competition in several venues. Now there is no choice. Thirty-two nations, including crews from Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba, will be joined in three weeks time at Hazenwinkel and Lucerne by Australia and New Zealand and all the North Americans.

The British women's squad is expected to continue its revival under the chief coach, Mike Spracklen, after good results at Duisburg two weeks ago. The pair of Dot Blackie and Cath Bishop have been moved to double up in the eight which lost to Germany on the second day there.

In the single sculls Guin Batten who has taken several years to establish herself in the finalist class without ever breaking through into the medals is challenged by another Briton, the newcomer Catherine Grainger.

Under par Monty blasts putting game

By John Oakley in Hamburg

PERFECTIONIST Colin Montgomerie blamed his putting for failing to lead the Deutsche Bank Open in Hamburg yesterday.

Montgomerie, winner of the Volvo PGA Championship at Wentworth on Monday, finished his first round on 67, five under par, two shots behind leader Paul McGinley and one behind Peter Mitchell.

But Montgomerie said as he came off the final green: "I

could have been an awful lot better. I left five putts bang in the middle of the hole. Very poor indeed."

"I didn't miss a fairway and I didn't miss a green and I'm only five under. I left the putts in the middle at the seventh, eighth, ninth, 17th and 18th, all right in the middle. It should have been very, very good."

Montgomerie had looked as if he would race away from the field after having four birdies in his first six holes. But despite his immaculate golf from tee to green, he had only

one more birdie, at the par five 15th.

McGinley is still some way from Montgomerie's class, but the 31-year-old Irishman is determined to raise his game to another level.

After finishing with a seven-birdie 65, McGinley said that though he was not exempt for the US Open next month he was almost certain to try and play his way in through the pre-qualifying round.

"I'm going to decide on Monday evening whether to go to the US Open," he said.

"If I go I will miss two tournaments here, the English Open and Slaley Hall, so it's a big gamble for me."

"I'm not even exempt for the Open Championship unless I win here this week, but I know if I want to be the player I want to be I have got to play in all the big tournaments so that is why the US Open is on my agenda."

"I've booked my flight and my hotel for the US Open qualifying in New Jersey on Tuesday week but it could jeopardise my position to get into the Open."

Quotes of the week

● When he came round, the first thing he said was: 'Don't take me off! Glenn Hoddle, England's coach on Michael Owen's response to being knocked out against Morocco.
● To be the youngest [England] scorer is a great record to have. Owen on scoring the goal that beat Morocco.
● Don't come back to Sunderland or we'll cut your throat. Sick Sunderland fans warn Charlton's Clive Mendonca after his hat-trick led to his home-town club's defeat in the First Division play-off final.
● Maybe we used up too many prayers in 1973. Bob

Stokoe, who led Sunderland to the FA Cup that year.
● The most pleasing thing about today is seeing Ernie Els sitting there in the runner-up spot. That's usually where I am. Colin Montgomerie plays the bride for a change at this week's PGA Championship.

Ekimov's attack pays off

Cycling

By Martin Ayres
in Reading

THE breakaway specialist Viatcheslav Ekimov, of Russia, triumphed on stage five of the Prutour of Britain yesterday, with a surprise attack just over a mile from the finish of the 91-mile leg from Bristol to Reading. Australia's Stuart O'Grady sprinted home in second place to tighten his grip on the overall leadership.

Ekimov, O'Grady and Britain's Chris Boardman were in a 13-man breakaway group that sprinted clear of the main pack on Sulham Hill with five miles to go. As the leaders hurtled into Reading, Ekimov chose a small hill to make his move.

The former world and Olympic champion has scored most of his victories with late, lone attacks and he gambled everything on staying clear of the chasers.

"The run in to the finish was very winding and hilly and I knew a lone rider would stand a better chance than a group," Ekimov said. "I guess I went from too far out and I really suffered, but I managed to hold out for my first win of the season."

He revealed that he has been suffering from a shoulder injury received in a racing crash

in early May. "It's painful to grip the bars but it's getting better every day," he said.

O'Grady's Gan team defended his lead throughout the stage and set him up for intermediate sprint wins at Cherhill, Marlborough and Wantage. His day's haul of 15 seconds in bonuses extend his overall lead to 36sec over team-mate Chris Boardman, who finished fifth.

"I was happy to be confined to team duties we're fully committed to keeping Stuart in the leader's jersey," Boardman said. "It's hard work and we've got another tricky stage tomorrow but we'll be trying to keep a lid on the race."

Before the start at Bristol's College Green, riders and public paid two minutes silent tribute to police officer Dave Hopkins who died in an accident the previous day on stage five.

The fatality, together with the incident on stage three when the field was sent off course, raised concerns that the new Tour's future might be endangered. However, Clare Salmon, the Pru's consumer marketing director, insisted that the company would stick to its three-year contract.

PRUTOUR (stages 6, Bristol to Reading, 91 miles): 1 V Ekimov (US Postal Service) 3h 30m 17sec; 2 S O'Grady (Gan) at 0:01; 3 A Kerr (Postlethwaite) 4 C Deane (Barnet) 4:00; 5 C Boardman (Gan) 5:10; 6 N Stephens (First) 6:10; 7 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 7:10; 8 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 8:10; 9 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 9:10; 10 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 10:10; 11 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 11:10; 12 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 12:10; 13 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 13:10; 14 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 14:10; 15 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 15:10; 16 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 16:10; 17 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 17:10; 18 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 18:10; 19 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 19:10; 20 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 20:10; 21 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 21:10; 22 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 22:10; 23 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 23:10; 24 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 24:10; 25 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 25:10; 26 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 26:10; 27 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 27:10; 28 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 28:10; 29 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 29:10; 30 J Goss (Postlethwaite) 30:10; 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The case for opening with Atherton

By Derek Pringle
Cricket Correspondent

AT LAST, after the confusion and dithering of the Test matches, the real plying begins. Somewhere within the confines of Lord's this evening, David Graveney and his selectors, including the new Test captain Alec Stewart, will sit down and pick England's team for the first Test at Edgbaston next Thursday.

It will, in all likelihood, not be a protracted meeting, as all but three places really pick themselves. But it will be an important one, especially against a tenacious and combative side like South Africa, whose own attention to detail has helped them deliver success to the sports hungry back home.

To the layman, filling just three places from the team that toured the Caribbean a few months ago, would probably suggest a sign of strength. Normally, this would be true, but as two of the positions are opening bats and bowler - the other being an all-rounder at No 7 - the team's foundations, and not just its brickwork, are at risk.

Finding a partner for Michael Atherton, now seemingly back on route to his cussed best, is perhaps the most ironic of the decisions the panel will have to make. Two months ago in the West Indies, despite Atherton's poor form, the choice was an easy one.

Unencumbered by either captaincy or the keeper's gloves, Alec Stewart, until Philo Wal-

lace and Clayton Lambert stole some of his thunder, was the opener of the series. Since then, Stewart's role has burgeoned to incorporate both of the above, while forsaking the one for which he has a proven Test record. He will now bat at three or four, with Nasser Hussain occupying whichever of the two remains vacant.

Of the main candidates to face the new ball only two, Nick Knight and Mark Butcher, have already played Test cricket. The others, Darren Maddy and Steve James, heavy scorers in last season's Championship, however, both toured Kenya and Sri Lanka with England A during the winter.

They all have a case, though the groundswell behind Maddy,

a surprise selection for the one-dayers, perhaps makes him favourite, with the left-handers Butcher and Knight running him a close second. Now 30, James is probably just the wrong side of the watershed to begin a Test career.

A hard worker, Maddy scored heavily on that A tour, managed and coached by Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting respectively. Less natural than the others, Maddy is technically sound, something the dashy Knight has problems with - his back foot has a tendency to go back but not across.

Indeed, only the prospect of bleeding a newcomer upon what is normally a result pitch, will cause concern for the panel. In which case Butcher, the

more compact of the left-handers, may well find himself back at the head of the order.

Filling the all-rounder's role has been a perennial problem since the departure of a certain you know who. At Edgbaston, the onus will be on seam, which provides a straight choice between Mark Ealham, the Hollies, Dominic Cork and Craig White.

Hollies junior would be the choice of the bold, but England's selectors, like their charges, are rarely bold until a deficit accrues. Likewise, they may feel the choice of Cork, whose rehabilitation, after two years of injury and domestic problems, is not yet complete.

Hollies senior will certainly take up a portion of the

discussions, but this is likely to concern his merits as one-day captain rather than his suitability to be England's pivot. However, an announcement, is not expected until later in the summer, by which time Ealham may have cemented the place he will surely be given in front of White.

Finally, providing Angus Fraser is happy bowling at first change, the selectors have to pair a new ball bowler with Darren Gough, now thankfully back to his bustling best.

Before spin splints reduced him to one day's cricket in the last fortnight, Gough's most likely partner would have the man he shares the new ball with for Yorkshire, Chris Silverwood. Now the contest looks to

be between Dean Headley, Andy Caddick and the re-instated Ed Giddins, taking wickets for his new county Warwickshire.

Under David Graveney's chairmanship, all players have been given a clean slate, after testing positive for cocaine, will not be held against him. Nevertheless, Headley, who had an erratic tour of the Caribbean, will probably prevail, something not likely to be extended to Andy Caddick, the most disappointing of England's bowlers on tour.

Only one spinner will be included, though another will be drafted in should the pitch look as if it will respond to spin (unlikely). When Atherton was

captain, Phil Tufnell was the spinner of choice, a position he is almost certain to relinquish to the off-spinner Robert Croft, whose drift clearly troubled the South Africans during the one-dayers.

Ian Salisbury, having spent a winter in Sydney with Shane Warne's spin doctors, is another getting some good press. But while it is true that South Africa struggle against high quality wrist spin, Salisbury is no Warne. In other words, until the selectors have irrefutable proof of his newly acquired miserliness, they are unlikely to pit him against a side who begrudge their opponents every single run.

POSSIBLE ENGLAND XI: Atherton, Knight, Stewart, Headley, Thorpe, Ramprakash, Ealham, Cork, Gough, Headley, Fraser, Giddins.

Cotter takes up task to steady Glamorgan ship

By David Llewellyn
at Lord's

Middlesex v Glamorgan

IT must have been very frustrating for the champions, particularly when they saw the pitch - a batsman-friendly strip which had already seen a couple of days' use in Middlesex's ill-fated Benson and Hedges Cup quarter-final tie - and their feelings could only have been heightened when Mark Ramprakash, having won the toss, invited Glamorgan to bat.

At that point they must have wished that their former opener Hugh Morris could have slipped out of the nearby England and Wales Cricket Board offices, where he now works, donned whites, pads and protective gear and piled up the runs the way he used. Instead, reality closed in and Steve James was accompanied to the middle by the wicket-keeper Adrian Shaw.

The former Neath rugby centre is nothing if not versatile, so far this season Shaw has batted in every position except

No 6 and No 11 in all cricket, but if he is looking to establish himself as an opener, he probably still has some way to go to fill Morris's considerable shoes. He lasted two balls. The second one, from James Hewitt, had him leg-before.

Runs did not exactly come in a rush, but Shaw certainly missed out. James, who scored a double hundred last week, appeared to be well on the way to another three-figure innings. He had been quietly motoring along for more than two and three-quarter patient hours, during which time he had helped himself to a dozen boundaries, when he allowed himself one moment of careless driving and was snugged up at backward point for 79.

He had at least shared in a century stand for the second wicket with Adrian Dale, that partnership being terminated shortly before lunch. James departed about half an hour after the interval and his captain Matthew Maynard, back after a month on the sidelines, did not last much longer, an injudicious hook at the 50th ball of his innings resulting in a catch at long leg and a wicket for Angus Fraser.

Suddenly no one on the Glamorgan side looked as if they could stick around. Morris must have been spinning on his office chair at the profligacy of it all. Thankfully, Michael Powell (43), carefully shepherded by Tony Cotter, did what his elders and betters should have done and got his head down. He and Cotter had put on 86 for the fifth wicket when Powell went. Cotter, though, stayed, reaching his fifty after almost three hours of application. He at least demonstrated that the spirit of Morris has not completely disappeared.

Stephen Fleming, the New Zealand captain, scored his second Test century to put his team in command at 260 for 3 in their second innings on the third day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo. Fleming was unbeaten at 106 at the close, with Craig McMillan on 64 and his side 280 ahead after the hosts' first innings finished 285 all out in the first session yesterday.

Franks, who opened the bowling at a lively clip, soon removed Jon Lewis, but Durham made a decent fist of their reply until Michael Gough and Nick Speak were each caught at second slip in quick succession.



Gary Kirsten of South Africa drives Jonathon Lewis through the covers at Gloucester yesterday

Photograph: Ben Radford/Allsport

'Captain Chaos' claims century

By Derek Pringle
at Bristol

Gloucestershire v South Africa

FAMOUS for their thoroughness, South Africa set about preparing for England, both on and off the field. But if a century by the acting-captain Gary Kirsten kept the viewing public on semi-alert in their seats, Hansie Cronje, taking a rare game off, settled back to watch videos of the England team.

Kirsten's batting is clearly a lot better than his navigating. Due to practice in Bristol the day before this match, Kirsten, unsure of the route, relied on

Allan Donald instead. Despite 10-years experience of the county circuit with Warwickshire, the pair promptly lost their way and were late.

Mishaps apparently befell Kirsten regularly, and he is nicknamed "Captain Chaos" by his team-mates, the moniker apparently being coined after his first Test in charge (the one against Pakistan that was delayed after two of their players were allegedly mugged in a brothel).

But if that proved hectic, Kirsten looked far more serene yesterday than he did during the one-day series, where he made 23 runs in three matches. Mind you, with Courtney Walsh absent,

and with Mike Smith not swinging the ball, there was little to ruffe feathers, let alone remove them from the tourists caps, until the off-spinner Martin Ball weighed in with three wickets.

Yet while Kirsten went about compiling the 24th first-class century of his career, the first by a South African on this ground since 1907, Gloucestershire had their successes. Coming on first change, the skipper Mark Alleyne removed both Gerhardus Liebenberg and Jacques Kallis, both batsmen edging behind.

With Kirsten coming into runs, the only other dilemma was which two from Jonty

Rhodes, Brian McMillan and Lance Klusener, will play in the Test next week. At the outset of the tour it looked like being a battle between Rhodes and McMillan, with Klusener a certainty as first change bowler. Now, following a pounding in the one-dayers, Klusener's place is not so definite.

If runs count for anything these days, Rhodes after a slick 59 is leading the race. Coming in at No 5, he drove and booked with certainty, something McMillan never matched in a scratchy knock that had lasted 42 minutes and produced just three runs before he mis-pulled Ball to square leg. Later,

Klusener threw his hat into the ring with an unbeaten 33 as he and Nantie Hayward added 72 for the eighth wicket.

As captain, Cronje, an earnest sort of fellow, would no doubt have been satisfied with proceedings on the field. With both Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock also resting, his side were efficient without being awesome, that is their way.

Should England want to confuse their methodical preparations, then the first step is to pick 11 players who have never appeared on telly. In an age of satellite TV that would be a challenge for the most dedicated armchair selector.

Batsmen lack application on 'interesting' pitch

By Mike Carey
at Chesterfield

Derbyshire v Leicestershire

THEY are celebrating 100 years of cricket here at the picturesque Queen's Park Ground. Among the anecdotes about Cliff Gladwin, Les Jackson and company at last night's banquet, everyone would have agreed that this is invariably an interesting pitch to bowl on first thing.

Darren Maddy now knows

that to be true. Needing to play an innings to rubber-stamp his selection for next week's first Test, the Leicestershire opener met a good ball from Phillip DeFreitas which bounced and left him to have him caught at slip.

Though it all happened under the scrutiny of the England coach, David Lloyd, Maddy surely need not be unduly pessimistic; even in a stay of only 10 overs there was ample evidence of his composure and immaculate technique.

Dominic Cork, whose return to form and fitness Lloyd would have been monitoring, but nothing more, had a better day. Though struggling early on, he found some rhythm later and his five-wicket haul was his first in the championship since 1995.

His aggressive, wholehearted approach typified all Derbyshire's bowling in conditions where the old ball still bounced and moved around. Even so, Leicestershire will rue the lack of application that cost

them their last seven wickets for only 74 runs.

All seemed serene when they lunched at 131 for 2. The left-handed Iain Stutcliffe demonstrated some of his qualities, especially his strength off his legs, a hundred seemed there for the taking when, gratifyingly, he walked for what must have been a very thin edge off Paul Aldred.

After that, only Aftab Habib got established or seemed to want to, and he survived a difficult one-handed chance to

the wicketkeeper off DeFreitas at 27. He was left high and dry with an unbeaten 39 after Cork, helped by three leg-before decisions, took 5 for 32 in 16 overs.

The Derbyshire openers, Michael Slater and Adrian Rollins, found themselves exploring various edges against the new ball. The ball passed the outside edge more than once before Rollins drolled the ball up towards mid-wicket where Matthew Brimston held a spectacular, one-handed catch.

Scoreboard

British Assurance County Championship

First day of four; includes Sunday play; 11.0 today

Derbyshire v Leicestershire
CHESTERFIELD: Derbyshire (4pts), with nine first-innings wickets standing, are 227 runs behind Leicestershire (1).

Derbyshire won toss	
Leicestershire - First Innings	
V J Slater not out	27
D L Maddy c Aldred b DeFreitas	27
J Sutcliffe c Aldred b DeFreitas	82
P F Smith b Cork	25
P P Simmons b Cork	38
A Habib not out	32
P A Nixon b Cork	20
C C Lewis c Aldred b Cork	0
J Omond c Cork	0
M T Brimston b DeFreitas	0
Extras (b2, w6, nb24)	23
Total (22.1 overs)	246
Fall: 1-34, 2-62, 3-150, 4-172, 5-174, 6-223, 7-233, 8-235, 9-272, 10-285, 11-301, 12-344	
Derbyshire - First Innings	
I S Rolles c Brimston b Omond	0
A Tweeds not out	2
Extras (b2, w6)	8
Total (for 1, 5 overs)	19
Fall: 1-14	

Middlesex v Glamorgan
LORD'S: Glamorgan (4pts) have scored 280 for 5 against Middlesex (2).

Middlesex won toss	
Glamorgan - First Innings	
S P James c Smith b Hewitt	79
A Dale b Ramprakash	0
A Dale b Ramprakash	38
P A Maynard c Hewitt b Fraser	25
P A Cotter not out	57
M Gie b Bates	20
C M Tolley b Bates	0
P J Francis c Speight b Bates	66
M C M W Read b Bates	0
P A Strang c and b Bates	13
N J Bowen not out	9
A R Oram c Speight b Wood	1
Extras (b3, w3, nb14)	46
Total (23.3 overs)	211
Fall: 1-8, 2-24, 3-54, 4-68, 5-85, 6-179, 7-179, 8-193, 9-204	
Bowling: Bates 21-7-59-5; Wood 16-3-50-2; Cotter 16-5-37-1; Foster 8-4-26-2; Philps 4-2-7-0	
Derbyshire - First Innings	
J B Lewis b Franks	15
M A Gough not out	23
N J Speak not out	13
Extras (b2, w3)	13
Total (for 1, 21.5 overs)	56
Fall: 1-23	
To bat: D C Boon, P D Collingwood, M P Speight, M J Foster, N C Phillips, M M Bates, J Wood, S J Harrison, I N Blanchett, J P Hewitt, A R C Fraser, P C R Tufnell	
Umpires: V A Holder and G I Burgess	

Nottinghamshire v Durham
TRENT BRIDGE: Durham (4pts), with nine first-innings wickets standing, are 186 runs behind Nottinghamshire (1).

Nottinghamshire won toss	
Nottinghamshire - First Innings	
A J Slater not out	3
I S Rolles c Brimston b Omond	0
A Tweeds not out	2
Extras (b2, w6)	8
Total (for 1, 5 overs)	19
Fall: 1-14	

Nottinghamshire - First Innings
M P Downman c Speight b Harrison 13
R T Robinson c Wood 0
U Azaal c Collingwood b Bates 25
G F Archer b Foster 0
N A Gie b Bates 20
C M Tolley b Bates 0
P J Francis c Speight b Bates 66
M C M W Read b Bates 0
P A Strang c and b Bates 13
N J Bowen not out 9
A R Oram c Speight b Wood 1
Extras (b3, w3, nb14) 46
Total (23.3 overs) 211
Fall: 1-8, 2-24, 3-54, 4-68, 5-85, 6-179, 7-179, 8-193, 9-204
Bowling: Bates 21-7-59-5; Wood 16-3-50-2; Cotter 16-5-37-1; Foster 8-4-26-2; Philps 4-2-7-0

Derbyshire v Leicestershire	
Derbyshire won toss	
Leicestershire - First Innings	
V J Slater not out	27
D L Maddy c Aldred b DeFreitas	27
J Sutcliffe c Aldred b DeFreitas	82
P F Smith b Cork	25
P P Simmons b Cork	38
A Habib not out	32
P A Nixon b Cork	20
C C Lewis c Aldred b Cork	0
J Omond c Cork	0
M T Brimston b DeFreitas	0
Extras (b2, w6, nb24)	23
Total (22.1 overs)	246
Fall: 1-34, 2-62, 3-150, 4-172, 5-174, 6-223, 7-233, 8-235, 9-272, 10-285, 11-301, 12-344	
Derbyshire - First Innings	
I S Rolles c Brimston b Omond	0
A Tweeds not out	2
Extras (b2, w6)	8
Total (for 1, 5 overs)	19
Fall: 1-14	

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TRENT BRIDGE: Durham (4pts), with nine first-innings wickets standing, are 186 runs behind Nottinghamshire (1).

Nottinghamshire won toss	
Nottinghamshire - First Innings	
A J Slater not out	3
I S Rolles c Brimston b Omond	0
A Tweeds not out	2
Extras (b2, w6)	8
Total (for 1, 5 overs)	19
Fall: 1-14	

Worcestershire v Sussex
Worcestershire won toss

Worcestershire - First Innings	
W P C Weston c Adams b Leary	14
V S Soler c Humphries b Kirtley	28
G A Hick c Adams b Robinson	104
G R Haynes c Adams b Leary	20
V M Moody c Adams b Kirtley	48
Extras (b2, w6, nb2)	25
Total (for 1, 21.5 overs)	234
Fall: 1-22, 2-73, 3-124, 4-224, 5-256, 6-258	
To bat: R K Illingworth, P J Newport, A Sherriff	

Surrey v Kent
THE OVAL: Surrey (4pts) have scored 257 for 8 against Kent (3).

Surrey won toss	
Surrey - First Innings	
M A Butcher c Marsh b Hooper	61
A J Stewart c Hooper b Patel	86
G P Thorpe c Patel b Hooper	26

Sussex v Gloucestershire
Sussex won toss

Sussex - First Innings	
W G Khan c J Adams b M T E Pearce	32
K Newell c Marsh b Hooper	40
J A Kirtley c J Leary, M A Robinson	33
Sargan Muehly b b Headley	40
A J Tudor not out	16
Extras (b7, nb2)	16
Total (for 8, 102.5 overs)	297
Fall: 1-142, 2-142, 3-193, 4-193, 5-205, 6-212, 7-234, 8-236	
To bat: M P Bicknell	
Kent - First Innings	
D P Fulton, R W T Key, T R Ward, C L Hooper, A P Wells, M A Ealham, M P Fleming, "S" A Marsh, M M Patel, M McCague, D W Headley	9
Extras (b2, w6, nb2)	25
Total (for 1, 21.5 overs)	234
Fall: 1-22, 2-73, 3-124, 4-224, 5-256, 6-258	
To bat: R K Illingworth, P J Newport, A Sherriff	

Sussex v Gloucestershire
Sussex won toss

Sussex - First Innings	
W G Khan c J Adams b M T E Pearce	32
K Newell c Marsh b Hooper	40
J A Kirtley c J Leary, M A Robinson	33
Sargan Muehly b b Headley	40
A J Tudor not out	16
Extras (b7, nb2)	16
Total (for 8, 102.5 overs)	297
Fall: 1-142, 2-142, 3-193, 4-193, 5-205, 6-212, 7-234, 8-236	
To bat: M P Bicknell	
Kent - First Innings	
D P Fulton, R W T Key, T R Ward, C L Hooper, A P Wells, M A Ealham, M P Fleming, "S" A Marsh, M M Patel, M McCague, D W Headley	9
Extras (b2, w6, nb2)	25
Total (for 1, 21.5 overs)	234
Fall: 1-22, 2-73, 3-124, 4-224, 5-256, 6-258	
To bat: R K Illingworth, P J Newport, A Sherriff	

Other match
First day of three; 11.30 today

Oxford University v Yorkshire	
THE PARKS: Oxford University have scored 293 for 7 against Yorkshire	
Oxford University won toss	
Oxford University - First Innings	
J A M Molins c Sidebottom	61
D R Lockwood c Wood b Hoggard	35
J A G Fulton c Vaughan	0
B W Byrne b Hamilton	0
C G R Lightfoot b Vaughan	10
R Garland c Wood b Vaughan	25
J A Coughton c White b Vaughan	45
D J Eade not out	67
N J P Barnes not out	5
Total (for 7, 91.4 overs)	293
Fall: 1-37, 2-48, 3-63, 4-66, 5-116, 6-195, 7-230	
To bat: D P Mether, S H Khan	
Yorkshire - First Innings	
A McCrone, M P Vaughan, "D" Byes, M J Wood, G White, B Parris, T A Chapman, G M Hamilton, R J Sidebottom, M J Hoggard, R D Stamp	10
Umpires: N G Cowley and R A White	
First Test	
Sri Lanka v New Zealand	
COLOMBO: New Zealand, with seven second-innings wickets standing, are 250 runs ahead of Sri Lanka.	

New Zealand won toss

NEW ZEALAND - First Innings 305 (S P Fleming 78, A C Parore 67; M Murtaza 5-30)	
SRI LANKA - First Innings	
(Overnight: 251 for 7)	
G N Wickramasinghe b Vettori	27
C N Bandara b Vettori	20
M Murtaza not out	0
M Bandara not out	0
Extras (b8 nb4)	0
Total	285
Fall (cont): 8-284, 9-284, 10-285	
Bowling: De Silva 12-2-43-0 (nb1); Cairns 15-0-56-8 (nb2); Harris 7-1-17-0 (nb7); Vettori 24-5-33; Wiseman 29-4-61-2; McMillan 12-4-31-1	
NEW ZEALAND - Second Innings	
B A Young b Bandara b Vettori	11
G N Bandara c Ranatunga	0
S P Fleming not out	36
N J Astle c Ranatunga	106
b Jayasuriya	34
C J McMillan not out	64
Extras (b1, nb1)	10
Total (for 3)	280
Fall: 1-11, 2-68, 3-180	
To bat: T A C Parore, C L Cairns, C Z Harris, D L Vettori, P J Wiseman, S B Doull	
Bowling: Wickramasinghe 7-0-21-0; Bandara 21-4-46-1; P A de Silva 20-14-0; Murtaza 22-5-76-1 (nb6); Bandara 8-0-38-0 (nb2); Kapanga 14-4-38-0; Jayasuriya 5-0-25-1	
Umpires: K T Francis (Sri Lanka), R E Koorizzen (SA)	

Tomorrow's fixtures
AXA League

One day; 11.0	
BRISTOL: Kent v Sussex	
CANTERBURY: Kent v Sussex	
BEDFORD TOWN CC: Bedfordshire v Surrey	
CORHAM CC: Wiltshire v Wiltshire	
DENBY CC: Derbyshire v Cheshire	
RGS COLCHESTER: Essex v Cambridgeshire	
LAKENHAM: Norfolk v Northamptonshire	

MCC Trophy

One day; 11.0	
BRISTOL: Kent v Sussex	
CANTERBURY: Kent v Sussex	
BEDFORD TOWN CC: Bedfordshire v Surrey	
CORHAM CC: Wiltshire v Wiltshire	
DENBY CC: Derbyshire v Cheshire	
RGS COLCHESTER: Essex v Cambridgeshire	
LAKENHAM: Norfolk v Northamptonshire	

BRISTOL: Kent v Sussex

CANTERBURY: Kent v Sussex

Woodward's red face

Rugby Union

By Andrew Baldock

THE England coach, Clive Woodward, introduced his maligned touring team to Australia yesterday and admitted he was "embarrassed" by it.

As young captain Matt Dawson called for some respect for the 37-man squad containing 20 uncapped players, Woodward said he was as upset as the Australian authorities about the withdrawal of many top names.

Dick McGruther and John O'Neill, both leading figures in the game Down Under, have continually criticised the Rugby Football Union for allowing players to withdraw from the tour, despite being fit enough to play for their club sides.

"I'm as wild as he [O'Neill] is," said Woodward, whose side face the Wallabies in Brisbane next Saturday. "We've learnt a massive lesson out of this. I can't speak on behalf of the RFU, but I'm pretty embarrassed about

the situation. As the national coach you would like to think that for a Test match you would be picking players without worrying about major problems with the game in England.

"This is, I like to think, a culmination of circumstances and a one-off. I don't think it will happen again."

Dawson, who inherited the captaincy from the most notable absentee, Lawrence Dallaglio, was upbeat about his squad. "The only thing they lack is experience and there's only one way to get that," he said.

The absence of players of the calibre of Dallaglio, Martin Johnson, Neil Back, Jeremy Guscott, Kyran Bracken and Mike Catt is reflected by advance ticket sales, currently struggling to reach 20,000 for the Test in Suncorp Stadium.

Woodward, while enthusing about his rookie squad, gave vent to feelings of obvious frustration that England will be taking on three heavyweights of world rugby - Australia, New

Zealand and South Africa - with nowhere near a full-strength side.

"I wish players were contracted to the RFU, rather than their clubs," Woodward said, as England completed a gym session following a 22-hour flight from London. "There are guys back home who are genuinely worn out, given last summer's Lions tour, then a long season of club rugby and injuries just got worse and worse."

"Next season, I will certainly be pushing behind the scenes for players to play the right number of games. If they don't, then they won't be in the England party."

Whether Woodward can persuade the clubs to rest their prize assets at crucial times for the national cause will remain a contentious issue, but with England's World Cup campaign just 17 months away from kick-off, he clearly intends to start flexing the muscles his high-profile post can warrant.

The Test team, complete with

their four new caps, begin serious preparations today, and Woodward promises that no effort will be spared: "We've got a week to get it together," he said. "We are underdogs, but I wouldn't have come here if I didn't think we could win the Test."

Dawson, the Northampton and Lions scrum-half, presenting an articulate, confident image during his first press conference on tour, added: "This is going to be a massive trip for a lot of people. I know that the 16 uncapped players out here want to gain Test honours. We will play in an unleashed manner and I believe we can cause Australia problems. There is pace in the backs and strength and power up front."

● Dion O'Cuinneagain, the South African-born Sale No 8, will win his first Ireland cap at blindside flanker in the opening tour game against Boland in Cape Town today. Left wing Dennis Hickie has recovered from a stomach bug and Ireland will field a near full strength side.



England coach Clive Woodward (right) and captain Matt Dawson face the press in Brisbane yesterday Photograph: Reuters

The thrills and spills of the right cast

A FEW Saturdays ago I went to Syon Park in Brentford. It was a very hot day, with sedges skittering across the surface of the lake and causing a commotion, like bored teenagers in a shopping mall and chironomid buzzers and alder-flies flying in and out of the sun. The lake at SP is ribbon shaped, so looks very like a river - it is an extremely pretty, if expensive, place to fish (an evening ticket with a two fish bag, is £18).

When I started fishing a couple of years ago, my overhead casting was surprisingly good. Then I learnt to roll cast and single and double Spey cast, which is...pretty swanky let me tell you and essential for most types of salmon fishing. Although the roll casting and Spey casting are still good, the overhead casting had been causing me problems for some months now - the line wasn't going down straight but rather in a great linguini-type arrangement. It was like the more I learned about it the worse I got - and good casting is all about being relaxed. So after five minutes of bad casting, I decided to give up fishing altogether. I packed up my rod and lay on one of the benches that are scattered along the bank and thought of what I would do if I didn't fish and what new use I could put my fishing vest to.

I read 'The Windknot' the Albury Estate (managers of Syon Park fishery) newsletter. It told me that you can tell if a fish is dead or not by his eyes. This is not as obvious as you may think because sometimes 'having been bashed about the head, the fish is rather still, but not yet dead. But if the eyes look down, the fish is still alive. If they are flat, i.e. looking straight out, then it is dead. I read on and discovered that the heaviest rainbow caught last year at Syon Park, weighed 18lbs. I called Pete who was further up the bank, on his mobile. "Put on a Cats Whisker or Damsel nymph," I advised - as lots of folk seemed to have caught something on that. Pete was not that interested, having just netted a two-and-a-half pounder, caught with a Bloodworm. What did I care. I was no longer a fisherman.

But the sun was shining, the sedges were still creating chaos and the birds were chatting. Out of the corner of my sulky eye I saw a magnificent trout rise to just below the surface, turn, and dive. I walked slowly across the cute bridge that strides the lake and moved to right near the entrance of the fishery. "Look," said Pete, "you're just not waiting long enough on your back cast. And you've had the wind against you. Try again." So I tried, and tried and suddenly it all came together in one glorious snappy, waited just long enough, swooshy S-shaped



FISHING BY
ANNALISA BARBIERI

presentation. I changed my Olive Damsel nymph with its bulgy eyes for a Goldhead Pheasant Tail nymph and was just lifting the line off the water when the line tightened. It was a fish, and despite what everyone says in these circumstances, he really was not small. Unfortunately, I got over excited and made the classic and very stupid mistake of not giving the fish any slack at all, and the line broke.

I cast again immediately. That fish was mine. Where the line entered the water it made a slight curl which made a good sight marker. The curl straightened out, towards the depths of the lake, yet I wasn't touching the line. In the belly of the lake, a rainbow was tasting my fly. I struck and sure enough another fish was on. He was a respectable size (the average is two and a half pounds at Syon), two pounds, but he fought like a warrior fish and the playing in was very enjoyable. By the time he was netted, I was shaking all over. Who needs drugs?

By this time the sun looked like a giant orange Alka Seltzer that had just started to fizz, and dusk was upon us. The wind changed again so I swapped banks and moments later the line jerked once more and I went to strike. But although I was drawing in line and there was obviously something there, it wasn't connecting. Suddenly a baby perch landed at my feet, the size 12 hook nearly bigger than he. I saw him safely back into the water.

The day at Syon Park ended with me catching no more fish. Pete (who had caught two) had to drag me off the bank at 9.30pm. I can't wait to go again.

A new by-law came into effect on 1 April: It is now illegal to use keepnets and landing nets made of knotted mesh or meshes of metallic material, and to keep more than one fish in a keepnet at any one time. The first time you could get off with a caution from the bailiff but it is entirely possible that you could be prosecuted and fined so change those nets! Orvis (0171 494 2660) are offering 25 per cent off any of their new knotless nets if you bring in your old one.

SOMETIMES
IT'S EASIER
TO TALK
TO SOMEONE
YOU
DON'T LIKE.



If you tell your girlfriend, will she think less of you?

When you have a problem, it's the most natural thing in the world to want to talk it through with someone.

Sometimes, though, this creates another problem: who's the best person to confide in?

An obvious choice would be a close friend. But let's face it, we don't always choose our friends for their amazing powers of tact, diplomacy and discretion. Tell one person, and you may end up telling the world.

You may be lucky enough to be able to talk to someone in your family. Then again, you may be one of the large number of people who find talking to your nearest and dearest agonisingly embarrassing.

A girlfriend or boyfriend? If you can, great. But sometimes we don't want to expose our weaknesses to those who fancy us.

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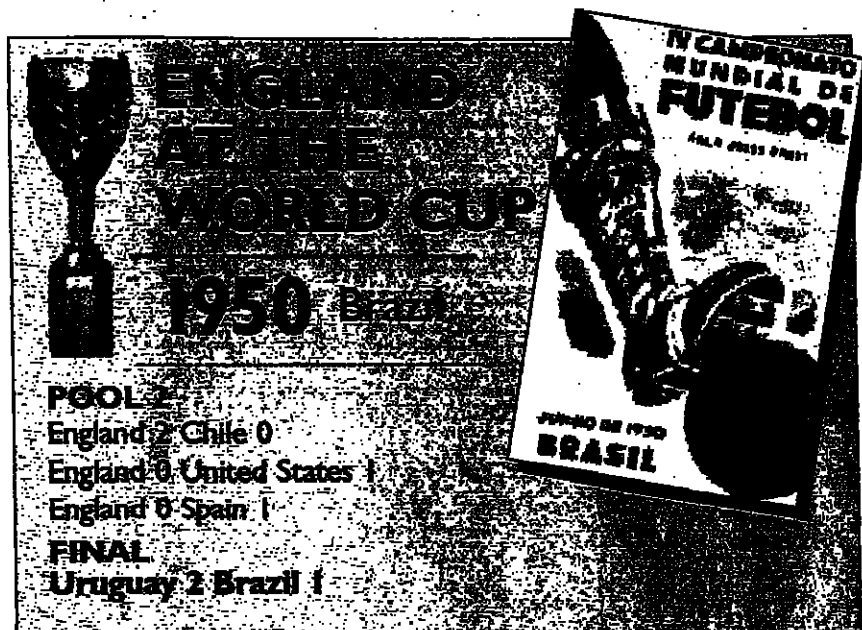
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We'll go through it with you.

Dark days and humble pie in Brazil



In the first of a series looking back at England's performances in the World Cup finals, Ken Jones talked to Eddie Baily about the year that shattered England's assumptions of superiority



EDDIE BAILY heard of his selection for the 1950 World Cup in Brazil when touring Switzerland with Tottenham Hotspur. So home for intense preparation? "You must be bloody joking," Baily recalled.

Along with goalkeeper Ted Ditchburn, Alf Ramsey and Bill Nicholson, one of four Spurs players in England's squad, Baily was told to report daily for training at the Dulwich Hamlet football ground in south-east London. "Not many footballers owned cars in those days," he said, "but Ted had this old American job, a Cadillac I think it was, and he drove us over there every morning."

Inside left in a Tottenham team that had won the championship of the Second Division by 12 points, and would win the championship itself the following season, Baily was about to take part in an event that no British player had experienced.

It was the first time a British team had entered the World Cup, all four of the associations having returned to football's world governing body, Fifa, in 1946 after an absence of nearly 20 years. The British Championship was designated a qualifying group but childishly Scotland chose not to compete after a narrow loss to England at Hampden Park left them in second place, even turning down a subsequent invitation when several countries withdrew.

So England travelled alone. The party that left London in early June included the usual blazered officials but, pathetically, no doctor. "It was typical," Baily

added. "There we were going off to a strange country about which we knew very little and there wasn't anyone we could turn to if we were sick or injured. Backward wasn't the word for it."

Only a grudging last-minute decision by the selectors added England's greatest footballer, Stanley Matthews, to the squad, after he had been sent to Canada with an FA touring party.

Most damaging, though, was the loss of Neil Franklin. An automatic choice for five years, the gifted Stoke City centre-half gave his wife's pregnancy as an



Baily: 'Ridiculous' selectors

excuse for missing the World Cup, but it concealed a sensational defection to Colombia, who were then outside Fifa's jurisdiction.

Franklin's move caused many in England's squad to question their working conditions; an iniquitous retainer and transfer system, a paltry maximum wage and minimal bonuses. "We were supposed to think ourselves lucky," Baily said, "lucky to have a life

in football and to be going off on this great adventure."

It began with a 31-hour protracted flight to Rio that included refuelling stops at Lisbon, Dakar and Recife. "On and on until we were all knackered," Baily added. "Alf (Ramsey) had been to Brazil as a Southampton player but he hadn't seen a lot of the country. We didn't know what people in South America looked like, whether they were small or tall or of a different colour."

The England party were talented enough to be rated favourites alongside Brazil but, absurdly, their first-ever manager, Walter Winterbottom, was subordinate to a panel of selectors who had no playing experience. "Walter had very little chance of putting out the team he wanted," Baily said. "It was ridiculous."

A vast new stadium, Maracana, was still under construction when the party arrived. "Cranes everywhere," Baily remembers along with the novelty of reaching the pitch from an underground tunnel and oxygen in the dressing-rooms. From their hotel windows on Copacabana beach the England players looked out on a different world.

Despite the problems that beset Winterbottom, goals by Stan Mortensen and Wilf Mannion brought England a 2-0 victory in their opening match against Chile. With the United States and Spain the other teams in their group (the 1950 World Cup was played on a league basis), England could feel confident of finishing top and qualifying for the final four.

England's match against the

USA took them to Belo Horizonte. They found a cramped, rutted and stony pitch. "The worst I'd seen since my school-days," Baily said. "The dressing-room came as a shock too, bleedin' bare bulbs and, would you believe, rats. Still it was only the Yanks. No problem."

Against the wishes of Winterbottom, who wanted to rest some of his players before playing Spain, the selectors sent out the team that defeated Chile. Still waiting for his first cap, Baily watched the game sitting alongside Matthews. "It didn't seem to matter very much when the Americans went a goal up, just a matter of time before the roof came in on them, but the further it went the more you sensed a disaster. I've forgotten how many times we should have scored but we didn't."

When the score was flashed to newspaper offices in London it was assumed to be a printing error. Surely 10-1 to England! "We could still qualify but the bottom had dropped out of things," Baily said.

Changes were made, probably by the FA's senior committee member, Arthur Drewry. Matthews made a belated return to the team and Baily was given his first cap. "I didn't do badly," he said, "but Spain beat us 1-0 to put us out."

Looking at the squad he had joined, Baily found it hard to believe. Matthews, Tom Finney, Mannion, Jackie Milburn, Ramsey, Billy Wright, Mortensen, Bert Williams. England, for so long convinced there was no more powerful football nation, had been found out.



Eddie Baily rises to the challenge during his Tottenham heyday

Photograph: Allsport/Hulton Getty

A game made stagnant by tradition

ENGLAND AT THE WORLD CUP 1954 Switzerland

POOL 4
England 4 Belgium 4 (aet)
England 2 Switzerland 0

QUARTER-FINALS
W Germany 2 Yugoslavia 0
Austria 7 Switzerland 5

Uruguay 4 England 2
Hungary 4 Brazil 2

SEMI-FINALS
W Germany 6 Austria 1
Hungary 4 Uruguay 2

FINAL
W Germany 3 Hungary 2

IT DIDN'T seem fair, some said facetiously, that England should have to face Hungary again just six months after a 6-3 thumping at Wembley and just before the 1954 World Cup finals. "They were a bit special," Tom Finney chuckled.

Now Sir Tom, the gifted winger Bill Shankly described as "gizzly strong" missed the Wembley slaughter through injury but he was back for the return in Budapest. Another rout, this time 7-1, the England manager, Walter Winterbottom, in head-holding despair on the touchline. "Didn't do much for our confidence I can tell you," Finney, now 76, added.

Finney can laugh about it now but he remembers the gloom in England's dressing-room. He remembers, too, what one of England's selectors (it would be another nine years before Alf Ramsey took away their ludicrous power) said solemnly

Ken Jones talked to Tom Finney about a campaign weakened before it had started by two demoralising defeats to Hungary

before the match - "the Hungarians are very worried about you. Remember they have not seen half our players, and they don't fancy their chances."

Finney caught Ivor Broadis's wink and heard him whisper, "Who does he think he's kidding. If the Hungarians are worrying, what about us?"

Hungary, the 1952 Olympic champions and now World Cup favourites, the team of Ferenc Puskas, Nandor Hidegkuti, Josef Bocsik and Sandor Kocsis, ripped England apart, giving the

best exhibition of teamwork Finney had ever seen. "We couldn't live with them," he said.

Coming on top of a 1-0 defeat by Yugoslavia in Belgrade that could easily have been much worse, Hungary's superiority triggered off suggestions that England should do the decent thing and withdraw from the finals in Switzerland.

After all, nothing much had come from the 1950 debacle or the loss of England's unbeaten home record. In a tradition-bound Football League the thinking remained stagnant. "Put the Hungarians in our game, week in, week out, and I'm telling you, it would be a different story," one manager sneered.

Finney had returned from service in Italy during the Second World War to figure brilliantly in a powerful England team. "I think if the first post-war World Cup had come a couple of years sooner we would have been in



Tom Finney shows the style that made him a legend in British football

Photograph: Allsport/Hulton Getty

with a real chance," he said. "Unfortunately it came a little too late for players like Raich Carter, Tommy Lawton, Frank Swift and George Hardwick who would have been outstanding in any campaign."

If wary of the Football Association's stern secretary, Stanley Rous (later to be knighted and made Fifa president), and mindful of Winterbottom's problems, senior football writers of the day questioned England's approach to international football.

Finney held them blameless. "The players and the press got on pretty well in those days, much better than they appear to do now, and we could under-

stand the criticism. Walter Winterbottom put in a lot of hard work and knew as much about international football as anyone, but we weren't going anywhere."

Opportunities for Winterbottom to work with his players were scarce, training get-togethers unheard of. "There was nothing like the amount of internationals we have now," Finney said. England played just once between the defeats by Hungary, a 4-2 victory over Scotland at Hampden Park. "Most of our matches at that time were against the other home countries," Finney added, "so we didn't often come up against different ways of playing."

Fifa kept to a mini-league system for the 1954 finals but could not resist a little tinkering. Two teams in each group were seeded and would play only the two non-seeds.

England began their programme with a draw against Belgium in Basle. Level 3-3 at the end of ordinary time, they drew 4-4, a result which meant that their goalkeeper Gil Merrick had given away 20 goals in five matches. "It wasn't fair to make Gil entirely responsible," Finney said, "but people were looking for scapegoats and he was an easy target. We just didn't defend very well."

At least England had showed

enough sense to include Stanley Matthews. And for the next match, against Switzerland in Berne, they at last found themselves a centre-half. Although Billy Wright had become established as one of the leading figures in English football, captain of Wolverhampton Wanderers and the national team, he was only an average wing-half.

Syd Owen, the latest to be tried as a replacement for the irreplaceable Franklin, had been through such a torrid time that Winterbottom had to find a centre-half from the men he had available. Influenced by the spring that enabled Wright, who was only 5ft 8in, to outjump

"I think if the first post-war World Cup had come a couple of years sooner we would have been in with a real chance. Unfortunately it came a little late for some of our players"

much taller forwards, Winterbottom turned to his captain. "Billy went on to be one of the best in the position," Finney said. "For such a shortish chap he was very good in the air and not many got the better of him on the ground."

Defeating Switzerland 2-0, England went forward to meet Uruguay in the quarter-finals. "We played well," Finney said, "but not well enough. Uruguay were simply too good for us."

Blamed for three of the goals, Merrick's international career was over. For Finney there would be another World Cup, his third. And another disappointment.

On Monday: Bill Nicholson, an England coach at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, talks about the competition won by Brazil and illuminated by the incomparable Pele

هكذا من الأصل

Calderwood slap happy for ultimate test

Scotland play the United States today in their last friendly before the World Cup. Phil Shaw talked to one of their key defenders

FOOTBALL'S recent history is littered with post-match punch-ups between rival players in the tunnel leading from pitch to dressing-room. Colin Calderwood does things differently. He slaps himself about the face, and he does it before a match.

The practice is intended, the Tottenham and Scotland defender explains, "to get the adrenaline pumping and bring the game into focus". It is easy, however, to imagine how the sight of Calderwood psyching himself up might psych out opposing forwards during the World Cup finals.

A model of zen-like calm away from the sport, the 33-year-old Calderwood will re-enact his unusual ritual in the Robert F Kennedy Stadium here today. No matter that the fixture against the United States is a friendly. It is Scotland's last warm-up for France 98, and his competitive streak is slipping into overdrive.

A week next Wednesday, Craig Brown's team tackle the world champions, Brazil, in the opening game. For that occasion, Calderwood asserts, no self-respecting Scot will need motivation. "It's a fantastic match for us. Sampling the atmosphere is going to be incredible, though we're not going there just to make up the numbers."

As one who did not gain his first cap until he was 30, having spent most of his career in the lower divisions with Mansfield and Swindon, Calderwood is particularly appreciative of his opportunity. "I don't pinch myself about the way it's gone," he says. "It took me such a long time to get to this level that I was ready for it. I wasn't exactly an overnight success."

In a camp brimming with Celtic and Rangers fans, it is typical of Calderwood's resolute character that he remains loyal to his home-town team, Stranraer. To the bafflement of

David Ginola and Jürgen Klinsmann, he also insists on keeping the radio on in Spurs' coach until their score is read out.

Field Mill, Mansfield, was where Calderwood began his career at 17. That setting is light years removed in scale and style from Giants Stadium, New Jersey. Yet there he was last Saturday, facing Colombia in a 2-2 draw which he regarded as a useful rehearsal for another South American side.

"They're not as strong as Brazil, but they are comparable in terms of technique and the ground was similar to the Stade

'The new rules are fine as long as refs aren't conned by forwards taking theatrical dives at the slightest contact'

de France. The pleasing thing was that we were stimulated by it rather than overawed. We should have won.

"Also, there won't be as many Brazilians there as there were Colombians. They made up about 90 per cent of the crowd. The neutrals may want to see Brazil play their football, but equally I'm sure a lot of people will back us as underdogs."

Last week's referee, an American, was asked by the Scots to interpret the new edict on tackles from behind as strictly as officials at the World Cup have been ordered to do. Calderwood, no slouch when it comes to ball-winning, was encouraged by the outcome.

"I thought it went well," he says. "As far as I'm aware, the rule states that the challenge

mustn't 'endanger an opponent'. That's fine as long as refs aren't conned by forwards taking theatrical dives at the slightest contact from behind."

"Players and officials are bound to interpret it differently and there'll probably be a rash of red cards. But provided we're not diving in, wrapping legs around people, it shouldn't be a problem."

Calderwood anticipates a sterner test against the Americans. He sees their athleticism as similar to that of Norway, another of Scotland's group opponents in France, and recalls a chastening 2-1 defeat by the US prior to Euro 96.

"Everyone expected us to win, but they were a decent side and they've improved since then. They beat Austria 3-0 away in a friendly, and we know from our qualifying group how difficult that was. They've also beaten Brazil, even if it wasn't their strongest line-up."

The US operate an unusual 3-6-1 formation. "That can be difficult for defenders," Calderwood admits, "though I can't believe the midfield will be a flat six. There'll be players breaking to support the front man."

That lone striker is likely to be Roy Wegerle, whom he remembers as a clever player from when they were both at Swindon (Wegerle was on loan).

The Scotland squad have taken Andy Goram's dramatic exit in their stride, the only change Calderwood observed being the increased media scrutiny. They have trained "pretty hard", but also indulged in his twin passions of golf and cards, not to mention the delights of Manhattan.

Tonight they return home to reintroduce themselves to loved ones. Next Thursday it is off to France. First, though, Calderwood is seeking a result to keep Scottish confidence bubbling and feel like a slap in the face for their hosts.



Colin Calderwood did not win his first cap until he was 30 and appreciates the greater challenges of international football

Photograph: Reuters

McKinlay's chance to stake claim Vogts takes hard line

By Phil Shaw
in Washington

FROM Vienna, Austria, to Vienna, Virginia, Scotland's World Cup campaign has almost come full circle, yet Craig Brown may still have one last selection surprise for their final pre-World Cup friendly against the United States here today.

Tosh McKinlay, who was left out in the cold throughout Celtic's championship season, is set to win his 20th cap in the 90 degree heat of the Robert F Kennedy Stadium.

The 33-year-old wing back, who appeared in all 10 qualifying fixtures, has played only two full senior games at club level since September - on loan to Stoke City - but now has the opportunity to claim a place in Scotland's line-up against Brazil on 10 June.

McKinlay owes his chance to the injury problems which con-

tinued to beset the Scotland manager, Craig Brown. His Celtic colleague, Craig Burley, has a calf strain which is likely to necessitate a reshuffle in midfield. Gordon Durie, the squad's lone Ranger since the departure of Andy Goram, is also doubtful because of a groin injury.

"There's no way we'll gamble on them," Brown said. "Our doctor told me that if the US was the first game of the World Cup he could guarantee me Burley, but not Durie."

Brown's considerations have been further confused by the blistered feet of another McKinlay, Blackburn's Billy. He is none the less expected to come into the central midfield trio, with Christian Dailly switching to the right flank to accommodate Tosh McKinlay.

An odyssey which began 18 months ago has led the Scots to a training camp just outside the

capital. A more unlikely setting in which to prepare for a competitive fixture against Brazil is difficult to imagine; their hotel is next to a freeway and surrounded by car showrooms and shopping malls.

Despite the various fitness concerns, Brown is convinced his squad are approaching tournament condition.

"We feel they're peaking at the right time. The key thing is to make sure we peak against Brazil rather than the US."

"Through the timing and the quality of our training, we think we've got it right," the Scotland manager said. "I like to think we've got trained, experienced eyes. You can see when a player is sharp and when he's fatigued. For example, Alex Miller (assistant manager), felt our strikers needed sharpness yesterday and worked with them after the rest had finished."

He anticipates a stiffer test than Colombia provided in last weekend's 2-2 draw. "The US's results in recent times have been excellent, and they are clearly playing very well. In fact, they've got better World Cup results than we have of late and they've also got players with top experience in Europe."

Brown is well acquainted with the Americans' unorthodox 3-6-1 formation. "It's a very resourceful system which suits their counter-attacking style very well," he said.

However, the heat and humidity may be just as important a factor in the way the game unfolds. "Our only concern is that we might have to make earlier substitutions," Brown said. "But that's the reason we're here, for acclimatisation. Hopefully, we won't encounter anything hotter when we're in France. We're very thorough in our preparations, whether we're

playing San Marino, Estonia or Brazil. If you start to differentiate, you devalue your opponents and players pick up on that."

The Scotland camp have received with interest news of the results involving their opponents at France 98. Norway, noted Brown, are evidently the "form team," but he added: "We only hope they are going to peak too soon."

Meanwhile, Alex Ferguson has phoned Brown from Casablanca to update him on Morocco. Ferguson warned him that they had outplayed England in the first half. Brown remains confident that he will be fully versed in the style of their African opponents, not least because Morocco will have played twice before meeting the Scots.

SCOTLAND (probable 2-5-2): Leighton (Paisley), Calderwood (Tottenham), Henry (Blackburn), Boyd (Celtic), Dailly (Derby), McKinlay (Blackburn), Lambert (Celtic), Collins (Morton), T. McKinlay (Celtic), Gallacher (Blackburn), Jackson (Celtic).

THE Germany coach, Bert Vogts, wants to see his players step up a level in today's World Cup warm-up match against Colombia after their disappointing 0-0 draw with Finland on Wednesday night.

The team's lacklustre performance, rounding off several days of training in the Finnish capital, was widely criticised in the German press. Vogts said the players could not afford another showing like that.

"Colombia are of a different calibre," he said. "I'll be interested to see how far we've progressed, to see how much we can put our opponents under pressure. I expect a clear improvement from Helsinki."

Vogts also urged fans and reporters not to read too much into the Finland match, saying that although the Germans were poor it was too early in the build-up to draw conclusions. The coach is deprived of

defender Thomas Helmer, who has a torn muscle, for today's game in Frankfurt but still hopes Jürgen Klinsmann may recover from a bruised shin to play at least the second half against the South American side.

Vogts plans to make several changes from Wednesday's team. Olaf Thon will return to the libero position, taking over from Lothar Matthäus who celebrated his international comeback against the Finns after an absence of more than three years. However, the veteran Bayern Munich player could still find himself in the starting line-up to give more bite in midfield. Milan's Christian Ziege and Borussia Dortmund's Stefan Reuter will return to the wing-back positions.

The Colombians, who drew 2-2 with Scotland last Saturday in their most recent warm-up match, are playing down their chances of beating the three-times World Cup winners.

"We haven't made World Cup history," their coach, Hernán Dario Gómez, said. "That's what separates us from the great teams." The goalkeeper Farid Mondragon also said Colombia would not underestimate the task just because of the Finland result. "It's quite normal that teams don't play at the top level before a World Cup," he said.

Germany and Colombia have met only once before, drawing 1-1 in the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy. One member of the German squad in those days, central defender Jürgen Kohler, will win his 100th cap today.

Spain's goalkeeper Andoni Zubizarreta has a pulled muscle in his left leg and will miss the World Cup warm-up match against Northern Ireland in Santander on Wednesday. But the 36-year-old could recover in time for Spain's first group match of the finals against Nigeria on 13 June in Nantes.

Why Yugoslav champions' owner will not dare to visit Highbury

AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT METCALF

Yugoslavia

IF Arsenal, Manchester United or Celtic meet the champions of Yugoslavia in next season's European Champions' League, their directors could come face to face with a very unsavoury character in their opponents' boardroom.

Obilic Belgrade, formed in 1924 and named after a Serbian medieval knight, won their first Yugoslav title this season, surprisingly eclipsing the traditional footballing giants from the capital, Partizan and Red Star.

The man behind the sudden rise of Obilic is Zeljko Raznatovic - who is better known in

the western world as the ruthless Serbian military commander, Arkan.

Before the Balkan conflict, Arkan lived in western Europe, where he is wanted for armed robbery and other crimes. He also led a football fan club in Belgrade, from which he later recruited his paramilitaries, known as the "Tigers".

Despite his fearsome reputation, Arkan has not been publicly indicted by the United Nations tribunal in The Hague, the Netherlands, which is investigating alleged war crimes in the former Yugoslavia.

Two years ago, Arkan took over the then obscure and struggling Obilic club. By in-

vesting his fortune - which critics say was amassed through war-time smuggling and looting - Arkan has helped build Obilic into a top team. Their biggest rivals, Red Star, have alleged that Arkan used blackmail and other illegal methods to secure the title.

Whatever the background to their rise, Obilic will take their place in the European Cup this summer. "We can face any team and, with God's help, we will become European champions," a boastful Arkan said recently.

Because of the charges he faces in western Europe, it is unlikely that Arkan will be accompanying his club to any

away ties in the European Cup. He has, therefore, this week named his wife, Svetlana (also known as the folk singer, Coca), as his successor as club president, apparently so that Obilic can be represented abroad. At home, in Belgrade, though, it seems that this notorious warlord will still be pulling the strings.

Mexico

THE Mexican media heaped abuse on their national team on Thursday following Wednesday's humiliating 4-1 defeat by the German club side, VfL Wolfsburg.

One newspaper even called

for the squad to return home and pull out of the World Cup finals in France to avoid further embarrassment. "Bring them back," blared the headline in Mexico's normally conservative *Excelsior* newspaper.

"Pathetic," was the judgement of another leading daily, *Reforma*. Mexico led Wolfsburg 1-0 before collapsing under a four-goal barrage from the Germans within the space of six minutes at the end of the first half and the start of the second.

The result, against a side which finished 14th in the German Bundesliga First Division this season, made a mockery of Mexico's fourth-placed ranking in FIFA's world list.

The coach, Manuel Lapuente, said his players had become over-confident after scoring first and had poured forward recklessly, leaving their defence exposed. "This won't happen at the World Cup," he promised.

The defeat to the German team followed a 5-2 defeat by Norway two weeks ago that was mitigated somewhat by a 6-0 win over Estonia. The team have come under increasing fire following losses to the Argentinian side Boca Juniors, Chile's Under-23 squad and the Chilean club Universidad Católica this year. The Netherlands, Belgium and South Korea lie in wait in France.

11 DAYS UNTIL THE WORLD CUP FINALS BEGIN



SPORT

Saturday 30 May 1998

Chelsea sign up Casiraghi for £5.4m

Football
By Phil Casey

CHelsea last night broke their club transfer record with the signing of Pierluigi Casiraghi - and insisted that Mark Hughes still has a future at Stamford Bridge.

The European Cup-Winners' Cup holders splashed out £5.4m on the Italian international in a four-year deal that reunites him with his former team-mate Gianluca Vialli.

But it was the future of the former Manchester United striker Hughes that diverted attention away from the capture of the 29-year-old striker from Lazio. Casiraghi's arrival leaves the Blues spoilt for choice up front with the player-manager Vialli, Hughes, Gianfranco Zola and Tore Andre Flo also fighting for a place in the side.

Hughes, ironically named by Casiraghi as one of his favourite players, is the oldest of the strikers at 34 and has already been forced to accept that

he cannot command a regular place in the starting 11. But the Chelsea managing director, Colin Hutchinson, was adamant that Hughes is part of Vialli's plans for a serious assault on the Premiership next season.

And he revealed he would be holding talks with the Welsh international at some stage next week in an effort to resolve his future. "Mark Hughes and I had a long conversation in Martinique last week," said Hutchinson. "I talked to him this morning and he is fully aware of the situation."

"His situation will be looked at in about a week's time and I would like to stress Mark has one year left on his contract. There will be no moves to push Mark out of Chelsea."

The speculation regarding Hughes' future somewhat overshadowed the arrival of Casiraghi, who Chelsea had been tracking for over a year. He had also attracted the interest of Blackburn, the European Cup winners, Real Madrid, and the Serie A side Parma.

The former Juventus and Lazio player was delighted to have put pen to paper before jetting off last night on holiday where he will be forced to watch the World Cup on television having been excluded from Cesare Maldini's squad.

"There was interest from other clubs but nothing official. This was the offer that pleased me the most and I am very pleased to have it signed and sealed," said Casiraghi. "It was important that Mr Vialli was here and that was one of the reasons I decided to come. I played with Vialli for one year in Juventus and it was a great forward line."

"I know him as a player and not a manager, but he is a great player and he has had some great results in his first season as a manager and I think he will be a great manager."

"It will be an objective for next season for us to put in a strong title challenge. I had been at Lazio for the last five years and with the changes that were going on it was time to have a change of scenery."

Hutchinson also reiterated that another Italian, the midfielder Roberto Di Matteo, was not for sale at any price despite an approach from the Lazio president, Sergio Cragnotti, while tying up the deal for Casiraghi.

"He broached the subject and he was told very bluntly that Di Matteo is not for sale," said Hutchinson. "He told me every player has his price, what is Di Matteo's? I told him that he is not for sale at any price."

Hutchinson also revealed that there had been several "tentative approaches" for Flo but they have also been turned down, and also that a possible deal for Marcel Desailly from Milan was still on the cards and that he could be meeting the French midfielder next week.

The transfer saga involving Chelsea and Brian Laudrup from Rangers is still on-going but Chelsea's lawyers have written to the European Commission, who in turn will contact all interested parties next week to tell Rangers that Laudrup is entitled to move without compensation and that the Glasgow club could face a fine of up to 10 per cent of the value of the company if they do not comply.



Pierluigi Casiraghi acclimatises to the feel of Stamford Bridge as he signs up for a record fee yesterday

Photograph: Allsport

Platt on shortlist for Sheffield United job

By Alan Nixon

DAVID PLATT has emerged as a surprise contender for the job of Sheffield United's player-manager.

The Arsenal and England midfielder will meet United's board this week for an interview and is on a final shortlist of a handful of candidates.

Platt has made no secret of his desire to break into management and the Gunners will let him leave for a nominal sum if he gets the job.

Platt has been invited to talk to United on Wednesday about the vacancy after caretaker Steve Thompson stepped down last week. However, he may have to be persuasive as United would prefer an experienced manager after missing out on promotion in the last two years.

Thompson is also on the shortlist and other contenders include the former Queen's Park Rangers manager Stewart

Houston and one-time Oldham coach Neil Warnock.

Birmingham City skipper Steve Bruce is also on the wanted list, but has not yet been approached for an interview.

Norwich City want Sam Allardyce to be their new manager after interviewing 18 candidates for the post.

Allardyce's reputation is high after taking Notts County to the Third Division title and he has impressed the Norwich board in talks.

Now Allardyce will be offered the job of taking over from Mike Walker, although the deal will not be done until he agrees to the whole management team as Norwich would like Allardyce, previously coach at Preston and Blackpool to have Brian Hamilton as his assistant.

Hamilton coached neighbours Ipswich last season during their race for the promotion play-offs and the former Northern Ireland manager has also spoken to Norwich.

Everton move in on Stubbs

The Everton manager, Howard Kendall, has made an official move to sign Celtic's unsettled centre-back Alan Stubbs.

Kendall has asked the Scottish champions how much they want for Stubbs and been quoted a £3.5m fee. Kendall knows that Stubbs is desperate to join his boyhood team and the club is trying to sell Steven Bilić, Craig Short or Nick Barmby to fund the deal.

Everton are favourites to sign Stubbs despite only avoiding relegation on goal difference ahead of his old club, Bolton. Stubbs is an Everton supporter, as is all his family. He still has a house in Liverpool and it would be the ideal move.

For the past few months Stubbs has made Celtic aware he wants to leave and he stayed on for their championship triumph, but now wants to go. The fact that Everton have come in after several reports proved unfounded in the past will mean he could fulfil his childhood dream of playing for them.

Celtic are holding out for a cash deal and as they have no manager they can not consider swap deals for the defender. However, Stubbs will be hoping that Kendall can raise the funds in the next few weeks as he tries to buy a new look to his team.

Kendall is still actively chasing Bolton's Alan Thompson,

although he has had a bid rejected, and Derby County's Neil Carsley.

Everton have been censured by the Football Association and ordered to pay the costs of the hearing into a pitch invasion during one of their games last season. A disgruntled supporter ran on to the pitch during Everton's 4-1 home defeat against Aston Villa on 24 March, on the same day as similar trouble at Barnsley's match with Liverpool at Oakwell.

Everton were found to be in breach of FA rule 24 which relates to public order inside grounds and the safety management system inside Goodison Park was judged to have failed to meet the necessary criteria. The FA committee look into account the fact that the supporter to blame has since been banned from the stadium.

The Aston Villa goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich, will be put up for sale before the start of next season unless he agrees a new long-term contract, the Villa

manager, John Gregory, said yesterday. The 26-year-old Australian international still has a year left on his current agreement with the English Premiership club, but Gregory is anxious to guard against Villa losing out again under the Bosman ruling as they have just done with Steve Staunton.

The Republic of Ireland captain will walk out as a free agent next month after rejecting Villa's £1m a year offer to renew his contract. "I want Bosnich to sign a new four- or five-year contract because by the time he's 30 I expect him to be the best goalkeeper in the world," said Gregory.

John Gregory has been given a timely boost by the club's highly-rated central defender Riccardo Scimeca. The former England Under-21 international captain has hinted he is keen to sign a new contract at Villa Park providing Gregory comes up with the right sort of deal.

The Challenge Cup, the

tournament open to clubs in the Scottish First, Second and Third Divisions, has been axed. It is the first indication of the growing financial worries following the breakaway from the Scottish League yesterday of the 10 major clubs to form their own division.

The Challenge Cup, first played in 1991, has been without a sponsor since B&Q ended its association but in the past two seasons has been backed financially by the Scottish League itself. But in the changed climate the league will now use that money in another direction.

Falkirk are the final winners of the cup and the Stranraer manager Campbell Money, who steered his side to victory in 1997, said: "It is a disappointment for all the clubs that we do not have a sponsor and that the competition is finishing."

The family of Wilf Mannion are keeping a vigil at Middlesbrough General Hospital where the former Middlesbrough and England player is being treated for suspected pneumonia. A hospital spokesman said yesterday: "Mr Mannion has had a comfortable night and is stable." Mannion, who celebrated his 80th birthday earlier this month, was a post-war legend and played in the Great Britain side that beat the rest of Europe 6-1 at Hampden Park in 1947.

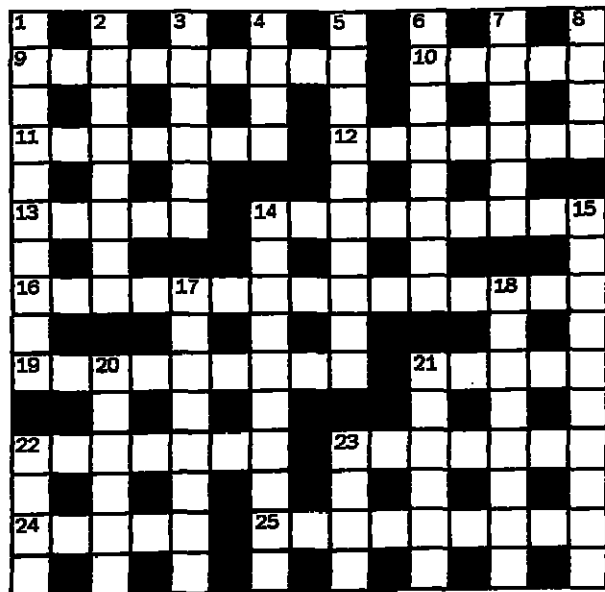
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3624, Saturday 30 May

By Mass

ACROSS

DOWN

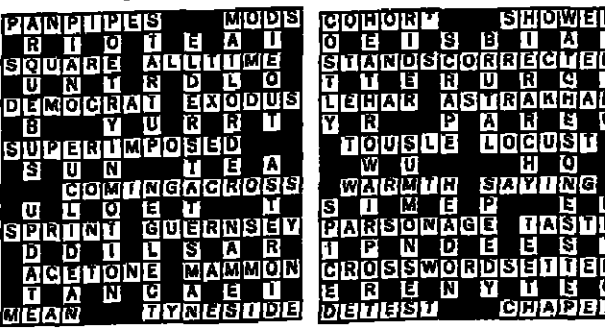


- 9 Fruit in crate transported to Tyneside (9)
- 10 End up in orbit (5)
- 11 Concerned with courses, with English in decline (7)
- 12 Capture seen in play, grabbing knight with a Rook (7)
- 13 Early city (Italian) cast in bronze (5)
- 14 Pink vehicle heading for the country (9)
- 15 Oval figure? (7,5,3)
- 16 Trimmer cut round bend on male (9)
- 17 Serve fruit cake in LA restaurant (5)
- 18 Mobilise, like soldiers when reporting (7)
- 19 Extra cover gets the batter, ultimately (7)
- 20 Distribution of US aid in part of Middle East (5)
- 21 Distant lake idle in open setting (9)
- 22 Unappreciative of runs in subtle fugate tune (10)
- 23 What a chiseller! (8)
- 24 Restrain, restrain writer (6)
- 25 Obscure English coin (4)
- 26 One unearthing facts about Kentish house? (10)
- 27 Tonic of brassy piece of music? (5,3)
- 28 A form of meat mainly found in Southern Italy? (6)
- 29 In speech take off the brogue? (4)
- 30 Tripe from cow old pals cooked (10)
- 31 This garment's the latest in ladies' wear? (10)
- 32 An example of furniture that's not practical (8)
- 33 Meal in Chunnel, maybe, including duck (8)
- 34 Prepare to run in heat (4,2)
- 35 Gain from enterprise round East (6)
- 36 Host provides service (4)
- 37 Order to march (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive handwritten copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: E Armstrong, Topham; E Elby, Peterborough; M Young, Highbridge; D Browning, Leicester.

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



TWELVE PAGES
OF SPORT
BEGIN
ON PAGE 17

كلنا من الواصل



YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 30 May 1998



When it comes to buying a home, cheap isn't always cheerful

Repossessions hold out the promise of finding a bargain, and many services offer to help you find them. But, as **Paul Stade** discovers, it may prove a false saving.

Anyone who has been house-hunting in the past year or so will be familiar with the heartache of finding a lovely property, only for its price to be way above what is remotely affordable. At a time when prices are still rising fast, particularly in London and the South-east, getting on the inside track can seem crucial.

One way of cracking the problem of how to find a cheap home is to look out for repossessed properties, where

lenders are trying in theory to dispose of them quickly and may accept a low offer. Supposedly catering to this need are many services claiming to give homebuyers details of repossessed properties in their own area.

The Building Societies Repossession List (BSRL) is one of them, the clear suggestion being that this will help you find a bargain. BSRL's own promotional fax describes the information it offers as "a list of the best buys in your area". Subscribers to the BSRL list must pay up to £95 to get three-monthly lists through the post, or up to £225 for an annual subscription.

But housing market experts warn that the savings on repossessed properties are much smaller than you might imagine, and that even these savings are often outweighed by the amount of work needed on the house you buy.

Ray Boulger, a manager at independent mortgage advisers John Charcol says: "A lot of people think the savings are greater than they are. They don't ap-

preciate that, if the property is particularly cheap, it's probably because it needs a lot spent on it. The people who owned the house before may have gutted it, for example."

Hugh Dunsmore-Hardy, chief executive of the National Association of Estate Agents, says: "There have, no doubt, been one or two bargains to pick up in the repossessed market, but I think less of that is now going on. Generally speaking, the values of repossessed properties reflect their condition."

Many lenders putting repossessed properties on the market will insist that the property be advertised in the press for a further seven days after an offer has come in. This is another factor that tends to drive prices back towards their true market value. These ads are also one source of the information contained on repossession lists (see box).

In the best possible cases, Mr Boulger says, it may be possible to save up to 15 per cent on the property's market price. "But you have to be careful not

to let people think they can get every repossessed property on that basis," he warns.

The lists generally give brief details of each property, together with details of the relevant estate agent. But, of course, this information is no good at all unless it is up to date.

Mr Dunsmore-Hardy says: "My only concern with these lists is how up-to-date and accurate they are, when the information may be provided through third parties. I would exercise caution."

Telecom Express, another list provider, was fined £2,500 last year for misleading and overcharging its customers. Regulators found that information people received was not updated regularly enough. Information on the Telecom Express service was provided by the Uxbridge-based SNC Telecommunications.

Telecom Express offered its Repossessed Property Index via a "faxback" service, which is paid for by the recipient. This charged customers £1.50 a minute for lists that regularly

took more than 15 minutes to come over the machine, implying a charge of £22.50 or more.

Another faxback provider - Megafone Ltd of Morecambe - was fined £300 when regulators found that its own list contained details of properties which had already been sold for as long as two months.

Repossessed properties are also sold through auctions advertised in the local press, or promoted through lists of their own. But Mr Boulger says: "The clients who have spoken to me have said that when they go to an auction the prices have ended up being quite a bit higher than the guide price, and they're not particularly good value."

Often the properties sold at auction are what Mr Dunsmore-Hardy calls "the real wrecks" - houses in such poor repair that getting a mortgage on them is all but impossible. These tend to be bought by developers, who then do the necessary work before selling them on at a profit, but are little or no use to private buyers.

WHERE DOES THIS INFORMATION COME FROM?

Estate agents will seldom publicise the fact that a house on their books is a repossession, for fear of cutting the price it will fetch.

Lenders are equally cagey. They keep a central list of repossessions, but guard its contents closely. So, where does the information on questionable repossession lists come from?

The answer may lie in section 21 of the Estate Agency Act (1979). This section demands that estate agents selling a repossessed property for a lender in the same group declare their interest in the sale to potential buyers. For people who know what to look for, this is enough to tip them off that a particular property has been repossessed.

The declaration can be made either verbally or in writing as part of the property's particulars. There is no single form of words used for this declaration. When Halifax property services is selling houses for its parent bank, however, documents note, "This property is being sold on behalf of Halifax plc".

Council of Mortgage Lenders figures show that the number of repossessions in the UK has fallen sharply since its peak of 75,540 in 1991. Last year, the figure stood at 32,770.

INDEX

Confused borrowers

More than 40 per cent of mortgage borrowers - almost seven million people - currently pay off their loan at the standard variable rate, typically the highest rate on offer from lenders.

Most do so because they are confused about the different types of mortgage loans available - including fixed, capped and discounted mortgages, according to a poll by the Mortgage Guild, a marketing group for independent home loan brokers.

About half the public is also put off switching to a cheaper mortgage because it does not want to start a long-term mortgage "all over again". Yet some 48 per cent of those polled would feel angry if they found out that their existing lender is offering better deals to new borrowers than to them.

Direct rescue

The prospect of greater competition in the vehicle rescue market, long disputed mainly by three organisations - Green Flag, AA and RAC - grew this week following the announcement by Direct Line, the telephone insurer, that it plans to launch its own breakdown service for motorists. Direct Line, formed in 1985, has grown spectacularly in the past 13 years by under-cutting insurers with its own cheap insurance policies. It hopes to do the same in this arena.

Travel bargains

Does travel broaden the mind? Not for some 19th-century explorers, whose written reminiscences verge on the racist. Yet, as John Windsor explains on page 3, memoirs of their travels to Africa and other places worldwide are rising fast in value. Among those snapping up the worst examples of racist writing are people such as the actress Whoopi Goldberg.

Bradford & Bingley

In an article in this section, dated 15 May 1998, Bradford & Bingley Building Society was said to have instructed its staff not to inform customers of higher interest-paying accounts available to them. We are happy to make clear that this is not the case.

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Stories to chill the blood

Collect to Invest: The pages of forgotten travelogues tell tales of big game hunting and the racism of imperialists. They thrill, embarrass and are selling for hundreds, reports John Windsor

The American actress Whoopi Goldberg collects racist books. Respectable heads of American corporations collect books about big game hunting. Could white colonists have imagined, as they penned descriptions of their slaving and exterminating, that their books would find a market in the 20th century among those who condemn them?

Look around this year's Antiquarian Book Fair at Olympia, 4-7 June, and you will find politically incorrect travel books displayed in a new category of their own – and that their prices are rising. Many still lie unrecognised and priced at a pound or so in secondhand bookshops.

The irony is that, amid the blatant racism and blood-lust, you can find opinions that have emerged as the political correctness of today. Take big game hunting. Today's rich Americans buy licences to cull wild animals in Tanzania, Botswana and South Africa. They are allowed to shoot, for example, old water buffaloes lagging behind the herd. Their licence fees fund conservation.

With this in mind, read the account written in 1892 by the renowned big game hunter Alexander Kinnloch, in his *Large Game Shooting in Tibet, The Himalayas, Northern and Central India*. If the "limited school" that is anti-field sports had its way, he rants, "men would become effeminate and women would lose much that now gives dignity and charm to their sex". So far, vivid, macho stuff.

But, perhaps surprisingly, Kinnloch supports "judicious hunting", instead of the "vulgar and childish desire to show a long list of slain at the end of the day, and obtain the cheap notoriety of the heaviest bag of the season".

The book is £648 from the antiquarian booksellers Henry Sotherton, whose Edmund Pollinger has been snapping up such books for a year or two. He says: "It's an armchair thrill. You are participating in big game hunting alongside some extraordinary people who adapted to their surroundings with little protection and somehow managed not to die. As far as prices are concerned, you have to feel your way – so far it's an untapped market."

Lord Hindlip's 1906 yarn of hunting in Abyssinia and British East Africa (£798) has a hint of self-parody worthy of Monty Python: "I was called from the clouds by a yell from the guide, and, turning round, saw at a distance of only 15 to 20 yards two rhino charging full tilt at us. I turned for my heavy rifle, which I saw to my horror was in its sling-case and unloaded. There was nothing to do but bolt. My syce, who was nearest the rhino, tripped and fell heavily on his face. That day, for some reason, I had put on a topee instead of a double terai hat, and as the boy fell, this blew off and fell between the prostrate syce and the rhino, which stopped short, tried to horn the hat, and got a Mannlicher bullet from Osman in the shoulder."

It's amazing how much thinking you can cram into the few seconds it takes a charging rhino to catch up with you. Winston Churchill, in his *My African Journey* (1908, cloth-bound, available from book-seller Adrian Harrington, £300), recalled: "There is time to reflect with some detachment that, after all, we were the aggressors: we it is who have forced the conflict by an unprovoked assault with murderous intent upon a peaceful herbivore."

Mr Pollinger says: "Around the 1920s and 1930s a revulsion seems to have set in, and authors take to the camera instead of the gun. Some relied on their flash to scare the lion they were photographing. If the flash failed, they were in trouble."

And what of the natives? There is often a curious mixture of respect and contempt. Captain FA Dickinson's book about big game hunting, published in 1908, lists three "Don'ts" when advising how to treat bearers. "Don't ignore a good gun bearer's good advice because you think you know a thing or two. Don't promise a native a thing you can't do. Don't on any account lose your temper."

If we chose to judge, we might give the benefit of the doubt to Dickinson's "Remember a savage was born a savage, and always will be one". Respect for local knowledge of the laws of nature, perhaps? But he goes on: "He has no brains. Treat him accordingly."

Whoopi Goldberg goes for such strong stuff. She has bought from Adrian Harrington, who also supplies black American institutions that collect black history. "There are a lot of black collectors," he says. "These are important documents that help them to understand where racism comes from and how it becomes part of a culture – even though they make you blush to look at them."

There is some pretty rednecked stuff about. John Campbell's *Negro-mania*, published in 1851 in Philadelphia (£95 from Harrington), says: "The dark race must submit to the fair". On equality: "God never intended it, had he so willed he would have made all one colour".

Sir Thomas Herbert's *Some Years Travels Into Africa*, published in 1677, alleges that the women of the Cape of Good Hope breed with monkeys. With misinformation like that hallowed by hard covers, is it any wonder that whites came to regard blacks as inferior? The book is £1,500 from Bernard Shapero.

In Britain in the 1820s, prints circulated showing monkeys dressed in suits. They were bought by a white middle class that had difficulty accepting the freed slaves who were beginning to make their way in white society.

An unexpected slant on dressing up is in the Very Reverend Ignatius Scoles's book, *Sketches of African and Indian Life in British Guiana*, 1885,



Their language is rather spidery than artistically founded, with whom 'his thought they have sustained mixture, for which the commentator upon Primary observed long since, *Plumetis non ferre carit, ne frideri potius quam ferre carit*, having a voice twice human and half, makes that supposition to be of more credit, than that they have a healthy complexion or countenance. So as considering the resemblance they bear with Baboons, which I could observe kept frequent company with the Women, their speech, not unlike the Simians neighbouring the *Adagou* mentioned by *Apollonius* in his *Argonautica*, rather agreeing with those than men, their frange life, their exercise, and the like considerations, they may be said to be the defect of Nature, if any fact ever were, and probably that one of the three appeared to *Anthony* the Hermit, in his life mentioned. Now what Philosopher alledge concerning the function of the Soul may be made applicable to these Animals, that the Soul of Man is gradually rather than specifically differentiated from the Soul of Beasts, no otherwise than the Sun is amongst Stars or Gold amongst Metals. Upon which account, the *Standard* of late years made in the Subject of their dispute, *Whether the Highlanders were of African Race, or no? or whether they were one rather a middle species of Men and Apes?* had it been a pure concerning their Savagery, might have carried with it greater probability. *Antony* also recording of monstrous births in *Pera* says that it proceeds from a Copulation of Women with Monkeys, which as repugnance to sacred courts of nature is not to be maintained; though these are a fable for that dispute as much as any. *Arjehis*, albeit a Heathen, in 1675, in his note to this position, *Quare homines Nigrosi Dixerunt Mones, etc.* And a

Sir Thomas Herbert's tome of 1677 alleged that Africans bred with monkeys

which describes how on Sunday afternoons, the "uneducated African man" would stroll in white man's finery – kid gloves, monocle, velvet-collared suit, Paris silk hat – and mimic the white man's gestures: "a cane is seen, now dangling from his forefinger, then gently used to side away a dead leaf". Then, "stopping and turning around on his high heel ... with lips compressed, viewing some slender tree from top to toe, as if he could not just then for his very life recall to memory its botanic name".

This rare book is a comparatively cheap £300 from Maggs. It is little sought after. But Maggs's price for the rare and sought-after *An Ivory Trader in North Kenya* by A Arkell-Hardwick, 1903, is £1,200. The reason? It has big game hunting in it. Hugh Bett of Maggs also reports that horrific tales by slaver captains and freed slaves sell better than books by anti-slavery reformers.

Correctness apart, the sheer incongruousness of some of the contents of these books puts a premium value on them. What about the photograph of "The author, testing the nerve of a native who has a banana on his head to be shot off" in *A Yankee in Pygmy Land* by William Geil, 1905, £248 from Sotherton's?

Antiquarian Book Fair: a free ticket can be obtained by applying to the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association, 0171-439-3118. Sotherton's, 0171-439-6151. Adrian Harrington, 0171-937-1465. Maggs, 0171-493-7160. Bernard Shapero, 0171-493-0876.

LOOSE CHANGE

Prudential is introducing a new "baby break" of up to six months in its mortgages. Borrowers will be able to take a break from payments when having a baby, caring for a dependent relative or for a family bereavement, subject to the loan having been maintained "to the lender's satisfaction" for one year. Call 0800 000222.

Cater Allen, the offshore bank, is offering a Gold Visa card which operates no handling charge within the UK or abroad. Cater Allen is also offering a USS Visa card, with transactions debited to a US dollar account, avoiding exchange costs altogether. The cards are issued only in conjunction with a Cater Allen High Interest Account, for which an initial deposit of £2,500 is needed. No annual fee applies. Call 0800 716177.

INTERNET INVESTOR



ROBIN AMLÖT

The same rules apply in cyberspace as elsewhere: be sure the small print makes sense

It was only a couple of weeks ago that I was saying that the Internet is not a mature medium. It is not. Furthermore, there has been proof this month that the people who use it are apparently not too mature either. I am not referring to the teenage cybernerds who look at web pornography but rather to the gullible twits who handed over a total of £18m to a spurious "Bank Debuture Trading Programme" which was being promoted over the Internet.

The International Chamber of Commerce's London-based *Commercial Crime Bureau* reports that US and Canadian investors were told that few people would qualify for these investment opportunities, which were "by invitation only". Transactions were said to be kept strictly confidential by all parties, for which reason no client references were available. You can find out more about how this particular scam worked on the International Chamber of Commerce's website.

Your internal alarm bells would ring madly if somebody came up to you in the street with an excellent investment opportunity which is by invitation only and which had no references or track record. Remember the simple investment rule. If something looks too good to be true, it probably is. Further, just because something is offered on the Internet, that

doesn't of itself make it better than products offered elsewhere, and it should still be understandable! Do not allow yourself to be baffled by cod science.

What the Internet can be is an incredibly powerful and cheap research tool to allow you to find out more about your potential investments. Here's another old financial saw – invest in what you know. Which is all very well but few of us will know much about more than a handful of companies. So where to find out more?

One useful starting point is CAROL, which is a free service offering Company Annual Reports On-Line. It is run by the investor relations department of March Communications, a public relations company, and is a set of links to corporate websites offering background information and details of financial performance. More than 80 companies in the FT-SE 100 now publish at least part of their annual report and accounts information on the Internet, compared to just 29 this time last year.

Where the web can definitely score is on speed and ease of access. For example, Legal & General is offering immediate temporary health insurance cover. All you need to do is complete and submit the on-line form and in return you get 14 days' temporary cover for Legal & Gen-

eral's Lifetime Essentials Health-Care. When you submit the form the website displays a certificate of temporary cover, which you need to print or save for your own information. Cover begins from midnight on the day you apply and continues for 14 days.

Admittedly the rest of the process relies on what the net-heads call snail-mail. You will be sent full documentation explaining the cover you have chosen and an application form. If you decide to take out the policy the cover will continue and you will be charged accordingly. If you decide not to proceed with the policy, then cover will lapse without charge, provided that a claim has not been made.

Another recent addition to the insurance policies available on the Internet is Eagle Star Direct's travel insurance. Individuals, couples and families can purchase annual or single-trip cover from the travel insurance site. Unlike some other web offerings, this site allows you to get a quotation and full policy information, have the option to store the quote, and then purchase the product while on-line.

Eagle Star Direct was the first insurer to offer motor insurance direct on the net. Several companies promote travel insurance and some offer quotations by e-mail. However, only one other group, the Halifax, sells travel insurance direct over the Internet. Strangely enough, the Halifax Travel Insurance Service is underwritten by Home & Overseas Insurance, a subsidiary of Eagle Star.

International Chamber of Commerce: www.iccwbo.org CAROL: www.carol.co.uk Legal & General: www.legal-and-general.co.uk Eagle Star Direct: www.eaglestar-direct.co.uk Halifax: www.halifax.co.uk

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BRIAN
TORÁ

Why I'm watching Russia

So now it is Russia's turn. Sergei Kiriyenko must be regretting catching the eye of his president. His own premier ship could turn out to be very short-lived indeed.

Tempting as it is to draw parallels with the Asian crisis, the situation in Russia is very different. While speculators gather to bet upon devaluation being forced upon the Russian administration, arguably the rouble is not expensive. Unfortunately, though, the recent record of the Russian government does not look good. The country is in an economic mess and badly needs money in its public coffers.

The failure of the administration to sell off one of its largest state assets, the oil company Rosneft, was the last straw in what has looked to be a steadily deteriorating situation. In the circumstances you cannot blame investors for beating a path to the exit.

Since the beginning of the year the Russian stock market has more than halved. In the past it has been one of the better performing emerging markets, but patience is running out. The country has been subject to considerable disruption following the government's inability to pay public sector wages. Striking miners blocked railway lines, action that cannot be helped an economy already reeling under successive shocks, not the least of which is the very high level of interest rates.

The decision to triple the cost of money to 150 per cent will not have been an easy one to take. Interest rates were raised last week, as it was, from 30 per cent to 50 per cent and the yield on Russian government debt has now topped 80 per cent. Crippling rates like this will damage the economy still further.

But, given that the average man in the street probably has

nothing invested in Russia, does it really matter? Unfortunately it does. If devaluation is forced upon the government there could be a knock-on effect around the former states of Eastern Europe. This is certainly what speculators are banking on, expecting a similar situation to develop to that which brought South-east Asia to a shuddering halt following the collapse of the Thai baht. But the case for a devaluation in Russia is far less clear. Aside from anything else, it could unseat the reform programme and lead to further turmoil.

Much will depend on what action the IMF takes. Already camped in Moscow, we can expect to see some fairly impressive numbers banded about as they endeavour to return stability to the region. But a fighting fund to protect the rouble will have to be big.

What this has exemplified is that emerging markets are still not favour of the month. With the Korean market at an 11-year low and Eastern Europe looking distinctly rocky, pessimists could soon be turning their attention to Central and South America in the belief that there really is a disease out there and it is very contagious. If that happens, you can kiss goodbye to the global bull market, weight of money or no weight of money.

So, as you can see, what is happening in Russia is of more than passing interest to the rest of us investors committed to the cult of equity. Cheap holidays in Thailand might be enticing but, speaking personally, I shall be quite happy if a trip to St Petersburg costs just as much this autumn as it does now.

Brian Torá is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee.

BEST BORROWING RATES

Mortgage	2 Year rate	5 Year rate	10 Year rate
MORTGAGES			
FIXED RATES			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES			
Scottham BS	1.00% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	1.00% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	1.00% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS			
UNSECURED			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
OVERDRAFTS			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
CREDIT CARDS			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
GOLD CARDS			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
STONE CARDS			
Scottham BS	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
First National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years
Abbey National	0.95% for 1 year	0.95%	0.75% Fixed for up to 10 years

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
INSTANT ACCESS					
Scottham BS	0900 443555	Savings	Instant	5.75%	City
First National	0900 222222	Card	Instant	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Branch	Instant	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Branch	Instant	5.50%	Year
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Scottham BS	0900 443555	Direct Access	Instant (1)	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 443555	Direct Access	Instant (2)	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Direct Access	Instant (3)	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 443555	Direct Access	Instant (4)	5.50%	Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
FIRST TESSAS					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Scottham BS	01723 500616	Scottham 30	30 Day	5.75%	Year
First National	0900 222222	First National	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Abbey National	0900 443555	Abbey 30	30 Day	5.50%	Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 227777	Leeds & Halifax	30 Day	5.50%	Year

DIRECT LINE RATES

SAVINGS RATES
Direct Line Instant Access Account

MORTGAGE RATE
Direct Line Standard Variable Mortgage Rate

PERSONAL LOAN RATES
Direct Line Personal Loans

AMOUNT OF LOAN

3,000

6,000

10,000

All rates correct as 12th May 1998.

0181 667 1121

SAVINGS

0181 649 9099

MORTGAGES

0181 680 9966

PERSONAL LOANS

Source: Direct Line Financial Services. For further information about the Direct Line products listed above, please phone the appropriate number quoting ref. INDB961.

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Advertisement Feature

It's worth shopping around for mortgage protection

Protect the roof over your family's head

Mortgage protection is one of the most straightforward and affordable types of life insurance cover. It's designed to pay off your mortgage if you die - and so protect the roof over your family's head. Buying your own home will probably be your biggest investment, so having cover that provides a tax-free sum to repay your mortgage if you die will certainly give you great peace of mind. In fact, most mortgage lenders may insist you have life insurance. But you don't have to accept their offer of cover. Like many things in life, it could really pay to shop around before you buy. For instance, you could take a look at Zurich Municipal's mortgage protection policy. Part of Europe's third largest insurance group, they can arrange cover for you from just £5 a month. It's all done over the phone in minutes. Their policies provide great value for money and they don't pay their staff commission - which means no pressurised selling. And just by working in the public sector, you are entitled to a special 15% discount. When Graham Powell, who has a career in the public sector, changed from an endowment to a repayment mortgage, he was required to take out mortgage protection. After receiving a quote from his mortgage lender, Graham decided to phone around for some alternative quotes. He was delighted to discover that he could save

nearly £90 a year if he took out the policy with Zurich Municipal. Over the 18-year period of cover, this certainly adds up to a significant saving.

Graham, from Corsham, Wiltshire, is married to Jane and has a young son, Tom. With a busy lifestyle, he found taking out a policy with Zurich Municipal extremely easy. He says: "The person on the end of the phone was very friendly and efficient, and the quote only took a few minutes. I was also very happy to discover I could have a 15% discount because of my job, which meant the premium was the cheapest one I found. I would certainly recommend Zurich Municipal to my friends and family."

From the tables you can see for yourself how economical it is to choose Zurich Municipal for mortgage protection.

Female, married, non-smoking public sector employee with 20 year mortgage protection cover

AGE	£50,000	£75,000
25	£5.15	£6.72
35	£6.55	£8.83
45	£12.21	£17.31

Male, married, non-smoking public sector employee with 20 year mortgage protection cover

AGE	£50,000	£75,000
25	£7.19	£9.78
35	£8.13	£11.19
45	£17.86	£25.76

Examples shown include public sector discount. Monthly premiums are dependent on a number of factors and in particular are higher for males, smokers and older ages. Cover and premiums are subject to individual assessment.

Apart from mortgage protection, Zurich Municipal also offers term assurance, which provides straight life cover without any connection to your mortgage. They can also cover you for critical illness, so that you would receive a lump sum if one of a range of specific illnesses was diagnosed. All round, Zurich Municipal is well worth considering for insurance cover. Why not phone them on 0800 147 147 - it's free. Their helpful staff are ready to take your call from 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. Please quote the reference IND2405.



Please note that for your security, all telephone calls on the above number will be recorded and monitored. Zurich Municipal is a trading name of Zurich Life Assurance Company Limited, which is regulated by the Financial Services Authority, for life assurance and investment business. Zurich Municipal markets life products of Zurich Life only and does not provide financial advice. Zurich Life Assurance Company Ltd is registered in England, No. 676139. Head Office and Registered Office: The Zurich Centre, 300 Parkway, Whiteley, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 1YU. Jane, as mentioned above, has a business association with Zurich Municipal.

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هنا من الامل

The rewards of a little bit of risk

Corporate bonds offer a good compromise for the investor who likes to play fairly safe, says Rachel Fixsen

Continuing nervousness in the UK stock market is leading increasing numbers of risk-averse investors to search for "safe havens" for their hard-earned savings. Many are turning to corporate bonds – seen as safer than equities but higher yielding than deposits or government-backed bonds – as a means of minimising risk.

This strategy carries the approval – albeit not totally disinterested – of some experts. "If [stock] markets are going to sell off a lot you have got some additional protection with bonds," says Mark Gull, investment manager at Gartmore for the Nut-West Extra Income Trust – a corporate bond fund.

The stock market certainly has risen strongly. The FT-SE 100 share index hovered this week at around 5,880, up 14.5 per cent since the start of this year and 26 per cent since this time last year. Yet many analysts are now suggesting that a correction is long overdue. So what exactly are corporate bonds?

These fixed-interest instruments take many shapes and forms, but are basically IOUs issued by companies for money borrowed. The bonds pay an annual rate of interest, or "coupon". They are seen as safer than ordinary shares because if a company goes bankrupt, bondholders have to be repaid before shareholders get a look in.

Once bonds have been issued and become securities traded between investors, the face value can go up or down. For instance, the price of a bond might fall if long-term interest rates rise, to keep the return on capital invested in line with market rates. If, for example, a £100 bond paying 5 per cent is sold for £90, then the return doubles to 10 per cent. Or a bond's price might fall if the company that issued it gets into difficulties and there is a possibility it may not be able to redeem the bond.

Corporate bond unit trusts can be held as a personal equity plan (Pep), with the tax advantages that brings, as long as at least 50 per cent of the fund is held in qualifying assets. So within your Pep allowance you could move some funds from equities into a corporate bond unit trust.

Peps as we know them are on their way out, to be replaced in April 1999 with the Individual Savings Account, but most advisers still recommend making the most of this

year's allowance. As long as you have less than £50,000 in Peps, you will be able to transfer investments held within them into ISAs when they come in. ISAs are also tax free and terms are similar to Peps.

Bond funds mainly suit people who want their investment to produce an income rather than capital growth. This means retired people in particular. But Ruth Clarke, development director at Commercial Union Trust Managers, says about 60 per cent of business in its Monthly Income Plus unit trust, a diversified corporate bond fund, at the moment is income being reinvested.

"Because there's this issue about whether the market's looking a bit 'toppy', there are investors moving into the MIR, treating it as a lower-risk growth vehicle," says Ms Clarke.

But, depending on the asset mix of the fund, there may also be some capital growth if you leave the investment in place for a reasonable period, says Colin Jackson of Baronworth Investment Services. If some of the assets are held in equities, there is likely to be capital growth. And over the last few years there has been some growth in corporate bond values because long-term interest rates have been declining.

Over the last five years, a £1,000 lump-sum investment in the Legal & General Fixed Interest unit trust



While the stock market remains a choppy ride, investors are looking for safe havens for their money

Photograph: David Rose

would have grown to £1,448.79, assuming net income was reinvested. If the same amount had been invested in a UK Gilt unit trust, it would on average have grown to £1,333.59 according to Moneyfacts, the financial information provider.

That money would have done even better, but arguably been at more risk, in an equity income fund where on average it would have swelled to £2,025.74.

Not all corporate bond unit trusts are the same. In many ways they vary far more than equity funds, because of the different types of instrument held within them.

"There is a wide range of risk pro-

files of these funds," says Mr Gull. For instance, within Pep rules, a corporate bond unit trust could hold much of its qualifying assets allocation in convertible bonds. These are bonds which after a certain date can be converted to ordinary shares in the issuing company. This means they tend to imitate share price movements rather than the government bond market.

And the 50 per cent of assets which do not have to be held as bonds could be held as foreign shares – subject to currency risk on top of stock market risk. So look closely at the composition of a fund before buying units in it. Performance tables will not tell the whole story.

"A lot of the ones you see leading the performance tables do that on the back of a lot of convertibles and preference shares which behave more like equities," says Steve Abbott, marketing director for Legal & General Unit Trust Managers.

Corporate bonds are theoretically more risky than government bonds, or gilts, but in practice issuers are often huge corporations, such as Abbey National. "The chances of defaulting are pretty remote," says Ms Clarke.

One thing to watch out for is that the fund is not using up capital to produce a high-income stream. Look at the running yield, which measures the income as a percentage of the

current cost of buying the bond, adds Andrew Bellshaw of Gartmore Extra Yield Fund, and compare this with the redemption yield, which also takes into account how much the bonds can be redeemed for. "If the redemption yield is lower than the running yield you can be fairly confident that you're burning your capital," he says.

Baronworth Investment Services, 0181-513 1219. On request, Baronworth will send readers a free copy of its Corporate Bond Table which compares conditions on more than 60 funds. Legal & General, 01222 448412; Commercial Union, 0181-686 9818.

MONEY & ETHICS

So you want to buy your home with a clear conscience?

In the latest of his series Iain Morse offers tips for the ethically minded on how to evaluate mortgages on offer: who deals with whom and what risks your principles expose you to

Arranging one's finances in the most ethical way possible is not just about investment. It extends to many other areas, including borrowing a mortgage. Yet ethically-minded investors face some tricky choices when it comes to finding the right loan.

At the very least, an understanding about lenders and their policies will come in useful, according to Amanda Davidson, a partner in Holden Meehan, a firm of London-based independent financial advisers. She says: "A degree of pragmatism helps, depending on where you borrow and which means of repayment you choose."

In the UK there are two important types of lender for domestic mortgages: banks and building societies. The key difference from an ethical investor's point of view is that

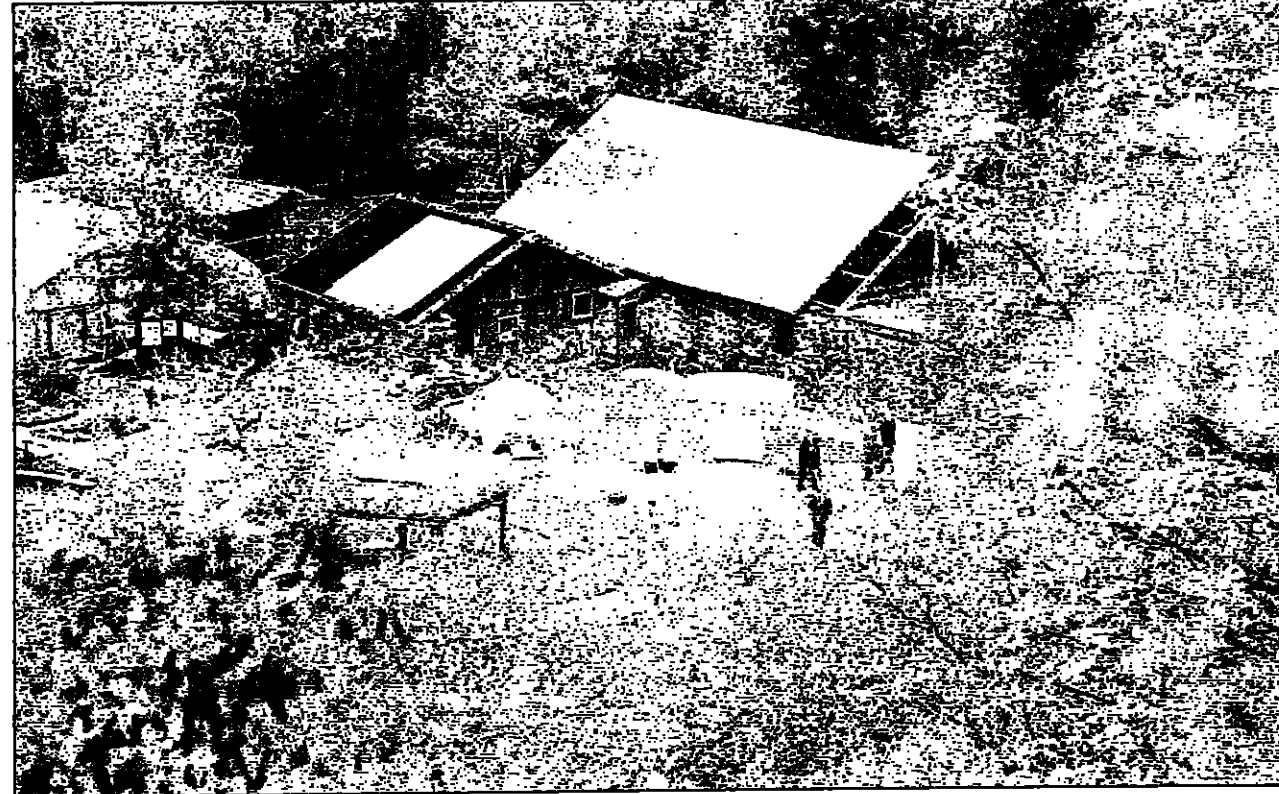
while most banks lend to governments and companies of all sizes, mutual building societies do not.

Precisely because of their mutual status, building societies must restrict their core business to deposit taking from and lending to individual members of the public. This means that they are free of involvement in areas of business which many ethical investors would regard as unacceptable.

The "big four" clearing banks: Barclays, Lloyds/TSB, Midland and NatWest, are sometimes accused of involvement in the provision of third world debt. Moreover, investors who object to the arms industry argue that any bank buying UK gilts is to some extent funding government expenditure on weapons through the Ministry of Defence.

Behind this lies a larger issue about banking confidentiality: the principal ethical question to ask of a bank is who they lend money to. Few are prepared to answer this question. Confidentiality is crucial to the success of banking operations. So selecting a bank by areas of business it avoids is virtually impossible.

A third category of mortgage providers, so-called "direct lenders", account for a small but growing sector of the market. Borrowing a mortgage "hook" on the international money market, then reselling it to individual borrowers, they fall the same ethical test as applied to clearing banks.



'Green mortgages' are now available on homes which meet stringent energy-conservation criteria such as solar panels

There are exceptions to this rule: both the Co-operative Bank and the much smaller Triodos Bank can fairly claim to follow ethical principles in their banking policies. Unfortunately, neither currently offers domestic mortgages as part of their product ranges.

Among the larger clearing banks, Abbey National does not lend direct to companies. About 40 per cent of Abbey's £151bn assets, of which two-thirds are UK-based, is in mort-

gages. The Abbey is also committed to taking "proper regard to the environment". But Abbey National does buy UK gilts and securities issued by other UK banks with high credit ratings – a list likely to include some of the "big four" already mentioned.

If this sounds negative, Ms Davidson warns against despair: "Despite the conversion of some large building societies to bank status, those remaining still offer a wide enough choice

of mortgage options to compete with the bank sector." Moreover, going to a building society is often cheaper. At present, the average lending rate charged by building societies is 8.34 per cent, against the banks' 8.7 per cent.

Ethically orientated mutuals include the Ecology Building Society, which lends nationally on the purchase and restoration of old buildings, and the Catholic Building Society which has a stated policy of helping

those who cannot easily find a mortgage. Meanwhile, Norwich and Peterborough Building Society has just launched a "green mortgage" available only for the purchase of homes that meet stringent criteria on energy conservation. The society completed its first "green loan" this week.

Separate from finding a loan, the way of paying it off can also create difficulties for the ethically-minded. Rob Harrison, editor of *The Ethical Consumer*

magazine, argues: "The morally cleanest solution is to take a repayment mortgage, where monthly payments include interest and capital, with a mutual lender."

Choosing this option means that you will only have to purchase life insurance to cover the amount owed on the mortgage. "Look for the cheapest cover from a mutual insurer, or friendly society," advises Ms Davidson, "that way you know where your money is going."

But for those who still want an interest-only loan, where an investment is built up to help pay off the capital after a given period, providers of ethical funds offer a variety of options: PEPs, so-called "unitised" endowments and even personal pensions, all of which can be used to pay off an interest-only mortgage.

Ms Davidson advises caution to ethical investors tempted by this method of repayment: "It's a matter of carefully weighing the pros and cons in terms of your particular circumstances."

Traditional with-profits endowments do not offer negative or positive screening on the underlying investments they hold, but do offer a low-risk means of paying off your mortgage loan. Typically, these funds hold a portfolio of investments including gilts, commercial property and shares in large, blue-chip companies which may, or may not be, ethical in their own business dealings.

"Ethical funds by contrast

tend to be more volatile in the short to medium term because they are invested into a narrower range of company shares, usually with a higher proportion of those in smaller companies," Ms Davidson suggests. None have significant holdings in property and most avoid gilts. This makes using them to pay off a mortgage riskier than using a with-profits fund.

The performance of ethical funds can also show significant variation. Clerical Medical's "Evergreen" fund, available in a PEP or unitised endowment, shows five-year growth of just 29.6 per cent. John Allen, chief fund manager at Clerical Medical, concedes: "It's not ideal for use as part of a mortgage, because it's too volatile."

Friends Provident is more confident that its Stewardship Fund can be used to back an interest-only mortgage, with 10-year growth on a unit-linked endowment averaging 9.52 per cent growth a year over that period. The company's with-profits fund has returned 8.11 per cent average growth over the same period.

The *Independent* has produced a free 28-page *Guide to Ethical Finances* by Nic Cicutt, the paper's personal finance editor. The guide, sponsored by Friends Provident, has information on all aspects of money and ethics, including loans and how to pay them off. Call 0800 214487 for a copy or fill in the coupon on page 4.

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Looking good for your pension.

Now you're 64 and need a hand

A good standard of care in old age comes at a price. Tony Lyons looks at what it takes to provide it

People are living longer. In the past this hardly mattered as family and friends provided a network of care. But with the break up of the extended family, children moving further away for work, divorce, more of the elderly living alone, it's more important than ever to think ahead, to plan for possible long-term care in the future.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF LONG TERM CARE

- Do involve your family in any decisions you make.
- Don't proceed with an investment contract unless you fully understand the risks involved.
- Do make sure you have a thorough understanding of all the products available, not just one.
- Don't wait until the Royal Commission deliberates on legislation for long term care.
- Do proceed to make provision with a company that will alter its policy in line with future legislation, at no extra cost to you.
- Do check whether your premiums are going to increase and if so, by how much.
- Don't forget that the lawn will still need mowing and household chores are still going to have to be done. Find out who will offer you a tailor-made plan.
- Do consult an experienced independent financial adviser who is a long term care expert.
- Do go to another company if your premium is loaded because of existing health problems.
- Do calculate what your lifetime income will be for you and your spouse.

sell their homes to pay for some sort of long-term care.

This has presented a myriad of problems, few of which can readily be solved. Hospitalisation is not the answer for the elderly or the infirm.

Nursing, whether at home or in an institution, is an expensive affair - care fees average £335 a week or £17,500 a year. Each year more than 40,000 homes are being sold to pay for the rising costs of caring for the elderly.

The Government has a Royal Commission looking at better ways of providing long-term care. But in the meantime a long-term care policy, providing cover for cases of serious ill health and infirmity, is one of the few defences available against the ravages of age. But of the 180,000 that go into care each year, less than a quarter will have made their own provision.

Paul Harvey, of long-term care experts Caswell and Company, independent financial advisers in Oxford, Surrey, says: "Long-term care" is an all-embracing phrase that the life insurance industry has adopted for its protection policies. "This generalisation causes confusion in an already complicated

sphere. There are no fewer than 10 companies offering a variety of ways to fund for this provision.

The prime factor to be considered when taking out a long-term care policy should always be the level of care rather than the cost, drawing upon past experiences of the events surrounding one's own relatives and friends.

"Basically there are two mistakes you can make," says Mr Harvey. "The first is to proceed to take out the cover, pay the premiums and die peacefully in your bed aged 85 without ever having made a claim. This route may incur the wrath of your children who would consider the insurance a waste of money."

"The second mistake is to do without long-term care, instead saving the money you would have paid in premiums. In 10 or 12 years' time you may have amassed £20,000. But what if you then have, say, a stroke? Your ill-equipped spouse may then have no option but to put you in a nursing home where the fees could cost up to £30,000 a year, draining your capital reserves and children's inheritance."

Don't be certain that you won't need long-term care. Every year some 100,000 suffer a stroke, and at any time there are 350,000 who have suffered from one that has left them with a severe disability; some 680,000 over 65 suffer from some form of dementia; and more than 40 per cent of the over-65s have a long-term illness that limits their ability to perform everyday activities.

It is vital to remember that, as things stand, there is no assistance from the Social Services until your total assets are below £16,000. To help you to make the right choice you need to talk to an adviser about the type of care you might need, what would be a reasonable cost, how much savings and income you have, and how much you would be entitled to receive.

Health care that doesn't leave you waiting

More and more people are turning to private medical insurance. Rachel Fossen asks why and how much it will cost you



The state of the NHS has pushed more and more people towards private medical insurance

Free health care for all under the NHS is a great idea. But waiting lists for non-urgent operations are growing, and those who can afford it often prefer to pay rather than put their lives on hold. The cost of private medical and hospital bills is out of the reach of most of us, so insurance is the answer.

Just over 6 million people in the UK are now covered by private medical insurance (PMI), up from 5.2 million in 1986, according to figures from the Association of British Insurers. "The rise in the market may be due to lack of confidence in the NHS. That's where providers have really scored," says Graham Bates of the independent financial advisers (IFA) Bates & Partners Consulting Group, in Leeds.

The majority of PMI policies are sold as job perks. Bupa, the largest in the sector with two-fifths of the market, says 60 per cent of people covered by its medical insurance are on company schemes. Of those who buy it privately, PMI really appeals to the self-employed who run their own businesses and cannot afford to spend time being on a hospital waiting list, according to Mr Bates.

But private treatment is not just a means to cutting waiting time for non-urgent surgical procedures. Many people use private hospitals even for critical conditions such as heart disease and cancer.

The market for PMI is broad, with over 25 providers in the UK offering some 450 plans. Traditional medical insurers Bupa and PPP Lifetime Care have in recent years been

joined by general insurance companies such as Norwich Union, Allied Dunbar and Legal & General.

The cost of PMI has been increasing much faster than inflation, but more competition in the marketplace should begin to slow the pace. Last year, the cost of PMI rose by an average of 9 per cent, according to Les Curson, general manager of the provider Clinicare, who says: "Medical inflation has been going up by more than the retail price index - but that's been the case since private medical insurance started."

One other factor is simply that people are making more claims on their insurance. A decade ago, people would use their insurance only as a back-up, using the NHS wherever possible. "Today people who are covered by PMI do not even think about using the NHS," Mr Curson says.

Also, technology in hospitals is increasingly expensive and this keeps PMI costs high. "There's more eligible treatment that can be done now - for instance,

cancers are more treatable, and chemotherapy and radiotherapy may go on a lot longer," says PMI broker John Stevens, of the John Stevens Partnership.

Until last July the over-60s used to benefit from tax relief on any PMI premiums, but this has been abolished. "People within the PMI market thought most of those over 60 with PMI would have to give it up," says Mr Curson. "Premiums for many have gone up effectively by 30 per cent last year, including the annual increase. But from our point of view, we've had a drop-out rate of less than 10 per cent," he says.

Rather than giving up cover altogether, many over-60s have traded down, typically taking on budget plans instead, he says. Others, to reduce costs have taken on a bigger excess, paying the first £200 of any treatment themselves.

Choosing which PMI policy to buy can be a minefield as comparisons are difficult. An IFA should be able to direct you to a specialist broker if he or she is not able to help. "If your fi-

ancial adviser can't convince you that he or she regularly sells PMI plans from at least three insurers, you should have your doubts," says Mr Curson.

The policies on offer vary widely in the level of cover they provide. Most expensive are the deluxe plans which include dental, optical, maternity and alternative therapy. Next in cost come the comprehensive plans which offer full refunds for most services including outpatient treatment and private ambulance service. Budget plans, the least expensive, are more restrictive with what they cover, often excluding outpatient care, for example.

To give an idea of costs, with Norwich Union Medical Cover, express or comprehensive cover would cost £174.66 per month for a 45-year-old married man with two children under 18. Trust Care Starter - more limited cover with limited hospitals - would cost the same man £43.48 per month. But, when looking at a budget policy, make sure the hospitals you would want to use are included.

"Most people go for the comprehensive plans, because they don't want any shortfalls," says Carole-Anne Hewett of insurance brokers Wilton Spero and Partners.

Take care when applying for PMI that you are scrupulously honest about your medical history, advises Graham Bates. "If you have a family history of something, you should mention it, because the chances are very much higher that's why you need the cover," he says.

"And always remember to contact your insurer before having treatment to ensure that any costs incurred will be covered," adds Mr Curson. That way, you can save any arguments later.

John Stevens Partnership, 01480 411666; Bupa, 0171-656 2000; Clinicare, 01438 741641; Norwich Union, 0800 142142; Bates & Partners Consulting Group, 01329 555 955; Wilton Spero and Partners, 01628 822121. IFA Promotion (0117 971 1177) will provide addresses of three IFAs local to you.

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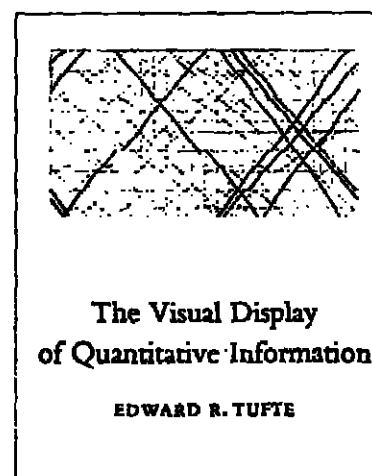
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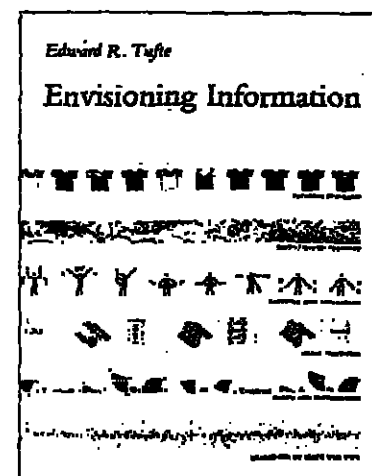
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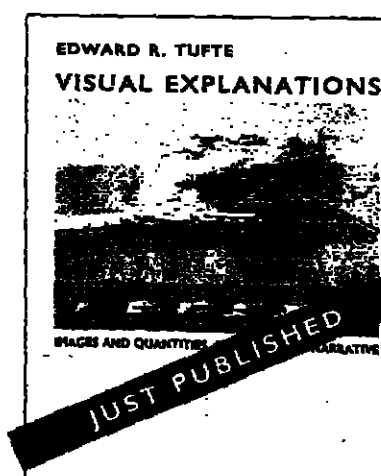
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Peace of mind when your body is falling apart

What happens if you're critically ill... and survive? As money gets tight you'll be thankful you paid out, says David Prosser

The statistics are scary. One in four men and one in five women will contract a critical illness before they reach the age of 65. One in three Britons will be diagnosed as having cancer at some point in their life. These conditions don't always prove fatal and survivors can often face serious disabilities for the rest of their lives.

Bad enough to have to cope with a serious illness. But have you thought about how your family finances would be affected? If you can't work, how

will you pay the mortgage, for example? And if your condition is fatal, how will your dependants survive?

Enter critical illness insurance (CII), sometimes known as dread disease cover. CII pays out a pre-specified cash lump sum if you are diagnosed as having a condition covered by your policy. What you do with the money is up to you - it's yours whether you live or die, even if you can continue to work.

That flexibility is important. Paying off the mortgage is often the first priority for CII claimants. But you might need the money to pay children's school fees, for example. If you're permanently disabled, the lump sum can pay for alterations to your home, nursing costs, or you could use it to pay medical bills. Terminally ill claimants sometimes use their money for a trip abroad.

Generally, a CII policy will cover you if you suffer a heart attack, stroke, most cancers, kid-

ney failure or if you need a major organ transplant. Apart from these, there are wide variations. Some policies are more extensive than others, covering more than 25 conditions including multiple sclerosis, AIDS, severe arthritis and Alzheimer's disease.

Of course, most people - particularly younger people - never dream these conditions will strike. But, says Roddy Kohn of independent financial adviser (IFA) Kohn Cougar, "I think CII is imperative". He explains: "We recently had a client with testicular cancer who had to claim £100,000 on his policy having been paying a £26 premium for just eight months."

However, with more than 60 insurers and some 230 CII products - each covering various conditions at different prices - finding the right policy can be daunting. Getting help makes sense. John Joseph, an adviser who specialises in CII,

says: "The range of illnesses covered is crucial - an IFA can guide you through all the policies available."

The first stage in finding a good CII policy is deciding which conditions you need cover for. Don't presume the big names offer the best deals. "The biggest seller of CII has, in my opinion, got the crappiest policy," says Mr Joseph - he thinks Midland Bank's CII covers too few conditions.

Most people will want a policy that covers heart attacks and cancer, the two most common serious conditions in the UK. These are always covered. In addition there may be particular conditions you want specified - if you have a family history of a certain illness, for example. Where insurers say they will pay out for terminal conditions, or illnesses causing total and permanent disability, ask about your specific concerns.

Insurers structure CII policies either so as to provide

cover for a certain period, or on a lifelong basis. If you're most worried about contracting a serious illness while you still have big financial responsibilities, the former may be best. Many people buy CII policies in conjunction with a mortgage where the premiums and the cash sum insured continue until you've repaid the loan, when the cover ends.

Similarly, you might want to pay out for CII only until your children are no longer dependent on you. In which case you'd pay the same level of premium each year until the cover is no longer needed. Other people prefer to be covered until their deaths. But do beware, CII premiums are higher for older people.

In theory price should be the last factor you should consider, once you've found the cover you need. In practice, says Roddy Kohn: "While we try to persuade clients to buy on the range of conditions, we

have to do that in the context of premiums."

However, don't be put off altogether. Buy as much cover as you can afford because some insurance is better than none. In fact, CII doesn't have to cost the earth. A 30-year-old male non-smoker, for instance, would pay £23 a month for £100,000 of lifetime critical illness cover from Bupa, while a 40-year-old would pay £45 a month for the same insurance. The rates for women are lower, particularly later in life.

Also consider combining CII with life insurance. While buying the two together is often cheaper than buying separate policies, take care with this approach. With most CII policies that include death cover, no one will be able to claim on your death if you've already claimed on the critical illness portion of the policy.

The writer is features editor at 'Investors Chronicle'.

CRITICAL ILLNESS - THE FACTS AT A GLANCE

- One in four men and one in five women will contract a critical illness (most commonly a cancer, a stroke or heart attack) before they reach the age of 65. Up to half of those diagnosed will survive five years.
- Critical illness insurance aims to pay a lump sum to people affected, which they can use for any purpose, including paying off a mortgage or going on a world cruise.
- With more than 60 insurers and 230 separate policies, however, covering a wide range of illnesses beyond the core "dread diseases", it is important to select the right product.
- It can make sense to buy critical illness insurance together with separate life cover. These are known as "accelerated" policies, which pay out on death or diagnosis of an illness, whichever comes first. Again, take care: your dependants will receive nothing after your death if the policy has already paid out on diagnosis.

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Knocked back, not knocked out

Common, long-term complaints such as depression or back pain need not leave you penniless, says Tony Lyons

Statistics show that between the ages of 30 and retirement, a person is 10 times more likely to suffer from a long-term illness or accident than they are to die. Of the population aged between 20 and 65, over 2 million are claiming sickness or invalidity benefit according to the Department of Social Security. At any time, over 1.5 million have been incapable of working for more than a year, of whom nearly 500,000 have been incapacitated for more than four years.

Grim figures indeed. Yet while most of us have life assurance policies, often to pay a mortgage, not

many consider protecting our income in case we cannot continue working.

Being unable to work due to illness or accident will affect all household budgets. Relying on the state is not enough. Invalidity benefits are severely restricted. As long as you earn more than £62 a week, your employer is obliged to pay you £55.70 a week for the first 28 weeks that you are unable to work.

Beyond that, the state pays the same amount for the next 28 weeks, rising to £62.70 after one year. But how many with families could survive on that kind of money? The average outgoing for household bills, including mortgage repayments, is estimated by Legal & General at almost £300 a week.

Less than one in 10 of the workforce has any sort of income protection insurance, known in the industry as permanent health insurance (PHI), according to Ronnie Martin, manager of life and health with Royal & Sun Alliance. "People don't like to think about being unable to work because

of illness or accident," he says. "We all have a head-in-the-sand attitude that it won't happen to me."

This is very much a view backed up by all involved in the sale of PHI. "Too many believe that their employer or the state will take care of them," says Lorna Baxter of Legal & General. Most employers will usually keep paying salaries for a while. But when it comes to more serious cases, only a minority of employers operate a staff PHI scheme. This ensures that after a certain amount of time, usually three or six months from being unable to work, there will be a monthly payment of up to three-quarters of net salary. Most employees and the self-employed, however, will have to make their own income protection provision.

There are around 50 PHI plans currently available from insurance companies and friendly societies providing income protection usually to age 60 or 65. They will all pay out a regular monthly amount if the policyholder is unable to continue normally working after a specified period

because of illness or accident. Most long-term incapacity is covered, including ME, mental problems due to stress and muscular conditions such as severe back pain, the only exclusions being long-term incapacity due to war or dangerous sports.

Premiums are determined by age at outset, period of cover, sex of the policyholder - females pay more than males as statistically they are more likely to suffer from long-term medical problems - and whether benefits are paid at a level rate or escalate with inflation. The over-riding factor determining premium, however, is the deferment period. If payment is to commence after a month, expect to pay a lot more than if it is to commence after three or six months.

There is a wide variation in premiums. For example, a male non-smoker aged 30 who wishes to provide a flat benefit of £20,000 a year payable after six months of incapacity until aged 60 can expect to pay premiums of £25.67 with Zurich Life, or £42.67 if female. If you wanted the policy to cover you until 65, Legal & General would

charge a man £10 a month and a woman £10.58. If you want the benefits and premiums linked to inflation, then the premiums would be £28 and £46.84 a month respectively with Zurich Life.

PHI policies pay out whenever an individual cannot perform his or her normal employment. Some will pay out a proportion if you can do a less arduous job, while others will pay the full amount even if the claimant can do other work.

Experience shows that nearly one-third of all claims are due to mental depression or stress, while around another fifth are because of muscular problems, especially with regard to back pain or arthritis. "These are all debilitating, long-term problems," says Mr Martin, "that are covered by PHI. Yet during the 1990s, people are choosing to buy critical illness policies which do not cover the main medical problems that cause people to give up working. For example, you can often return to work quite soon after a heart attack but you are unlikely to if you suffer from muscular dystrophy."

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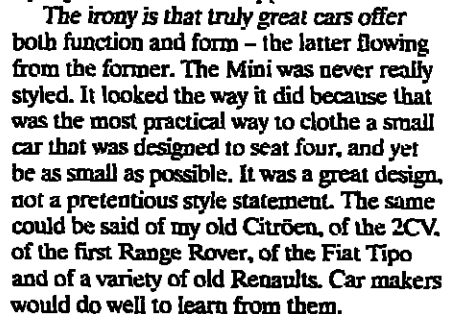
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In Japan you can flip through a virtual catalogue, choose the components of your dream home and sit back and wait for the factory to deliver it. Welcome to the future, says Andrew Mylius

House hunting - foot-slogging, surveying, bidding, gazumping - can be an experience full of angst and heartache. But it doesn't have to be that way. With the aid of computer modelling, would-be home owners in Japan custom-select their new abode from a kit of parts.

Having tried different configurations on for comfort "virtually", their final choice is relayed to factories where modular parts are made. The modules are then delivered as separate components and fixed together on site. From visiting the estate agent to moving in takes about 16 weeks.

This system of home building - super-Lego meets mail-order clothes shopping - has been normal in Japan for more than a decade. Chris McCarthy, a partner at the engineers Batlle McCarthy, says: "At an international level housing is exportable. You can make things in one country and build them in another. As far as the Japanese are concerned, that can be thousands of miles away, so long as the product is high value."

The transglobal migration of brown and white goods proves his point. Meanwhile, at the product design group DCAB, the managing director, Tom Barker, thinks the construction industry will soon be competing world-wide for contracts in the housing market. As a result, after killing off prefabrication and system architecture in the late 1960s and 1970s, UK constructors are starting to sit up and look afresh at factory-made houses.

Groups investigating new house-building techniques such as Taylor Woodrow, Countryside Properties and Berkeley Homes believe the market will be moved equally by "supply-side" push and "demand-side" pull. Both manufacturer and consumer stand to benefit from an overhaul.

While Alan Cherry, chairman of Countryside Properties, believes the Brits have a love affair with bricks, Nick Thompson,



Mass housing systems in Korea, a model designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership with Tom Barker

an architect partner at Cole Thompson Associates, is critical of housing that consists of smaller and smaller brick boxes. "It's selling yesterday's technology to a captive market." Today's technology offers open, flexible space and high performance to a generation of home-buyers raised as consumers and used to exercising choice.

Allan Kell, executive manager of the European Intelligent Building Group, is currently working on an experimental house type for mass-production - the Integer project. "People jump to conclusions about how a house of the future looks," he says. "They imagine a sci-fi pod on a stick." Concept houses, though, are seldom more than one-offs. As a result, Integer is deliberately steering clear of prescribing any aesthetic. The

focus is instead on the way the building works. If local materials perform, incorporate them, is its attitude. The aim is to deliver a high-volume product that is at least a third cheaper than conventional housing at erection stage, is more efficient to run and lasts longer as well.

"You could ask: 'What is great architecture?'" says Bernard Hunt, managing partner at Hunt Thompson. "That can be a distraction. There's a confusion between art and architecture. Really successful architecture is where people achieve a better quality of life. Many things in architecture haven't caught up with computers and cars for instance."

Toyota is one of Japan's largest housing manufacturers, applying to buildings the

same "lean production" principles - short lead-times, flexible specialisation, and task automation - that have helped it to dominance in the motor industry. It is instructive to note that John Egan, ex-chief of Jaguar and current head of the British Airports Authority, will report to the Government on efficiency in the UK construction industry later this year. Mr Kell notes: "Frankly, the British construction site isn't renowned for its efficiency." Richard Hodgkinson at Taylor Woodrow agrees: "Working in a factory is far more efficient than working in the rain."

Factories, simply, allow for better control of the production process. They are convenient for the constructor and represent improved value for the consumer. Mr

Barker notes that in Japan factory-made housing caters to the top end of the market. "They sell at a premium because they're 'manufactured'. What they sell on is the fact that the factory gives you special qualities," he says.

Time and money drive the streamlining of house construction. Factories not only deliver houses regardless of weather: they are safer to work in and, explains Mr Hodgkinson: "If you cut down the number of components on site you cut down waste. If you bring a high-quality part to a site you need to protect that item and commission it separately. Factory production could help you to incorporate high-quality doors and windows." Meanwhile the opportunity to dramatically cut the 70 million tonnes of

on-site waste generated by demolition and the construction process itself will be received enthusiastically by builders. Chris McCarthy predicts landfill will soon be charged at £15-20 per tonne. "Don't demolish, adapt," he advises. Difficult to achieve with buildings piled brick upon brick, but almost DIY with a house that clips together.

Centralising production also allows for prototyping and testing in a way that is standard to product design but unheard of in domestic architecture. Mr McCarthy likes locating faults: "The process of finding a problem is good. Everything has problems: it's a case of understanding it and designing it out." The customer has an environment to live in that works as well as the car he or she drives.

And, like the car, it should be serviced regularly and come with a full owner's manual. "Housing will need to become more functional, adaptable and maintainable," says Mr McCarthy. Modularity - the ability to grow or shrink the space you live in - offers the prospect of a "house for life". Meanwhile, the increasing importance of surveys in the house-buying process shows that people want more information about the service history of a house. "That is of worth to somebody who takes the house off you."

Going modular and creating homes as mass products doesn't mean all houses will look the same. The ability to tailor a building to suit its occupant means variety, not uniformity. Moreover, there are different ways of delivering modularity. Research is still in early stages in this country and it looks as if flat-pack, frame-and-panel and volumetric interpretations will develop in parallel. And factory-produced, catalogue-bought houses will not be full of alien technology or even, necessarily, conspicuously modern. Richard Hodgkinson says: "We're not involved in rocket science here. The innovation is the process."

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Ever tried conversion therapy?

Fiona Brandhorst on the perils and pluses of turning a garage or loft into a space fit for your gran to live in

Terry Akif was pleased as punch when she bought a small chalet-style house in a desirable corner of suburban Kent in February. Not only was it "frozen in the 1930s" with all its original features, but the garage was perfect for the major plans Terry had in mind. Her mother is disabled and she wanted to provide her with a ground-floor "granny annexe".

The garage seemed ideal to convert to a self-contained flat with its own entrance. "It had to have its own door," said Terry, "or the arrangement would never work." A small passageway between the house and the garage was to be enclosed and become the new front door and hallway.

Plans were drawn up and taken to the council planners to see if the proposals were viable. Terry was totally unprepared for the outcome. "We were told that it was against planning regulations for one property to have two front doors. 'I was gutted,' said Terry, 'and so was my mother.'"

"My husband is a painter and decorator and was already having to give up the garage as his storage place. He'd have to negotiate me, the children and my mother as he traipsed through the house with his tools every morning." However, Terry's mother is staying put and the



The only way is up: Terry Akif converted her loft after planners forced her to drop plans for her garage

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Akifs have reverted to a more traditional loft extension.

Janine MacLachlan was looking for a family house a few years ago with an extra room at ground level to accommodate her elderly mother-in-law who had emphysema. She came across a 1947 semi with an integral garage converted into a large room - an unusual find in

a very Victorian part of south London. "The house was a smidgin smaller than we'd hoped for, but the extra room overlooked a village-type green with a park beyond."

The room itself was devoid of any features and was 20ft long by 9ft wide, making it tricky for positioning furniture. Janine repainted the dark red walls

white and added a small en suite bathroom at the rear for her mother-in-law.

However, since the death of her mother-in-law, Janine has changed the use of the room to a study and guest room. "It means we can get the computer out of the living room, and when guests stay they can potter around without disturbing the

household and vice versa. It's an alternative to a loft conversion."

Peter Wood, sales director at Acorn estate agents in Bromley, Kent, has clients on his books specifically looking for properties spacious enough to house grannies, au pairs and nannies. "An extended home in a buoyant market attracts a good price," he says.

It's not only executive-style homes that are popular: "People are settling for terraced properties converted to make four or five bedrooms that they previously wouldn't have gone for, because they can't afford properties in the next price bracket."

In a sought-after area, a loft extension can enhance the value of a house. "We've found someone else who can start the work shortly," says Steve, "and I've had the money through from the building society. With any luck we'll be enjoying the view from our dormer in a few months' time. Now it's just a question of finding a suitable au pair."

three-bedroom house, in Essex, couldn't accommodate an extra person comfortably. "We looked at moving, but we like the location and our garden," says Steve. "We'd have to spend at least £30,000 to move to a four-bed house with the same advantages." Expanding into their loft to make a large bedroom and shower room seemed a good compromise.

The Cohens were given quotes ranging from £14,500 to £19,000 from national and local companies selected from the Yellow Pages. "They all came up with similar drawings," says Steve, "but were variable on the information they could give me. Some companies mentioned fire regulations while others didn't."

After several weeks of sitting through the sales patter, Steve and Tracy felt they could only trust one of the companies to do the job. But, like all good craftsmen, he was busy with other work until December, and the Cohens needed their bedroom by the end of the summer, so frustratingly they had to start looking for another company.

"We've found someone else who can start the work shortly," says Steve, "and I've had the money through from the building society. With any luck we'll be enjoying the view from our dormer in a few months' time. Now it's just a question of finding a suitable au pair."

Acorn is on 0181-663 3322.



Colin McBride wanted a conservatory on the roof - he fought for six months to get consent

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Raising the roof about bad loft extensions

Doing it on the cheap can be a headache, costing thousands to put right, Robert Liebman discovers

Too hot in summer, too cold the other 10 months, this badly converted loft represents extremely poor value for money - sometimes costing twice the original estimate to get right.

"If a loft has been built badly or without proper planning permission, the owner may need to spend the same amount of money as it cost to build," says Morris McGruer, business manager for national loft builders Econoloft.

"I've seen dormer windows installed which could blow down in high winds, and some lofts are simply too dangerous to use." Mr McGruer has also met loft owners who have showers that they can't use. "The builders installed the shower under the sloping roof where the user can't actually stand up."

Some people minimise various risks from the outset. After Mary Anne Perkins and Anthony Susman were married, their home suddenly had to contend with frequent visits from Dr Perkins' adult child and Mr Susman's three teenagers.

They installed a WC in their guest room, using a two-door arrangement which allows en suite access from the room itself or from the hall. Many months later, they decided to convert the loft.

They made initial inquiries in Jan-

uary, and six months later their home has seen no tool noisier or nastier than a tape measure.

They consulted the Yellow Pages and interviewed several firms. "We selected Econoloft because of their price, and partly the way the other companies presented themselves. One changed tack midstream about the construction method, and another was more concerned with slugging off other firms," says Dr Perkins, senior lecturer at Kingston University.

"About 10 days later, two men from Econoloft came to take measurements," explains Mr Susman, a solicitor. But instead of receiving plans, they received another visit from an Econoloft man about five weeks later. "He measured and remeasured the stairs, exchanging information on his mobile phone with Econoloft for about a half-hour."

They then received the full plans, wrote to Econoloft to resolve a few points, and now confront their next hurdle, which involves the neighbours on either side of their mid-terraced house: "We are sending the plans to each of them. We have to get their approval under a new law. It stops people doing work which may damage the neighbour's property," says Mr Susman.

If they knew they were going to convert the loft, would they have installed the loo in the guest room? "A lavatory in our loft would have been very expensive and very hard to get right," says Dr Perkins. Some houses have plumbing which can be extended upwards fairly easily and cheaply. Others don't.

For some lofts, says Mr McGruer, the only feasible WC is a macerator, a

contraption which is best described by what it is not: it is not a flush toilet. And generally it is not as good or as nice or as reliable as a flush toilet.

When the builders arrive in earnest, Mr Susman expects his loft to be converted in a fraction of time that the paperwork is taking - a matter of weeks, not months.

This slow, cautious, clever approach to loft conversion is strongly endorsed by Julian Owen, an architect: "I recommend a consulting structural engineer. Any roof structure has to be treated with great respect. The forces involved are comparatively quite large. Roofs have a tendency to spreading, to push out. The big problem is getting enough space through the ceiling ties to put the stairs in."

Plenty of builders will sidestep building regulations and professional consultations, but this can be a false economy, says Mr Owen, a director of ASBA, Associated Self Build Architects. "If you don't involve outside professionals it will be expensive because of low quality. Besides, the planners may learn about it anyway. Roof spread can be extremely serious and may not show up until months or years later. You also run the risk of leaks, of poor insulation leading to condensation, of poor ventilation leading to rot, and even fire danger."

Colin McBride hired a consulting engineer when he converted his loft as part of a larger refurbishment.

Mr McBride purchased the dilapidated downstairs flat in a two-flat Edwardian house in Sydenham, near Crystal Palace, in 1987. "I intended to renovate it and sell it on after about a

year, but the upstairs flat became available and I bought that one as well." He now owns the freehold, and he decided to convert the property into five flats.

"I have no architectural training, but it was relatively easy to do a site survey of the existing rooms and design around that. I hired a structural engineer to make sure that my alterations were structurally feasible," says Mr McBride. Among other things, the building's foundations needed to be reinforced so that they could take the extra weight of an additional storey supported by steel.

"The engineer used my footprint sketches for his drawings which we sent to the local council," he says. It was not all smooth sailing. Mr McBride's plans called for a greenhouse at the very top: "I had problems getting permission to put the conservatory on the roof. A few years ago, roof terraces were unusual. Today it's the norm. I fought for six months to get consent, but it was worth it. And they sent the district surveyor around periodically to check on the work."

The glorious roof-terrace apartment is his own. "It has two double bedrooms and an L-shaped living room which opens onto the conservatory, which opens onto a 20 by 10-foot garden. It's my private haven."

Havens are where you find, or make, them. "I wouldn't mind doing up another property, so I will sell this one for the right price," says Mr McBride.

ASBA can be contacted on 01924 873873 and Econoloft on 0800 269765.

Why le football is not the only reason France is in demand

A strong pound means property across The Channel has become affordable again, reports Ginetta Vedrickas

We're going to be hearing a lot about France this summer and not just about Le Football. For all the grotesque xenophobia we saw over ticket allocation, it still has to be said: the pound is three up at half time, while the franc is down to 10 men. Translated into property terms, it means the British are snapping up French homes with a vengeance.

Penny Zoldan, owner of Latitudes agency, which deals exclusively in French property, thinks the World Cup may cause a "blip" in sales: "Many people have said that they're too frightened to visit over that period and would rather wait until the end of July." Penny appears unworried about the temporary lack of sales as her office is the busiest it's been in the 10 years since opening. Why are people keen to buy now? "It's a combination. The pound is strong against the franc and people are feeling confident at last. Prices are still low as France hasn't fully emerged from its recession," says Penny.

The pound may be strong but why should this have negative effects on vendors? Luke Margrett has been trying to sell his Normandy farmhouse, bought nine years ago, since last April. "The strong pound brings out time-wasters," says Luke. "With seven francs to the pound buyers were genuine but now I'm being pestered by all sorts of people who I can't believe are serious." Luke recounts incidences of people whose journey to Normandy would severely limit their opportunities to visit the farmhouse including a man from Dorset whose wife won't travel by boat.

Luke is selling his partly-renovated house because restoration funds have evaporated and, despite many happy holidays there, he cannot often vis-

it which adds to the work when he does: "You have to spend a day hacking down the grass before you can relax." Luke finds French agents problematic: "The local agents are quite Mafia-like and won't even visit the house if the track is muddy." So far no-one has been prepared to value his house and Luke has received most interest from the Internet where he hopes to sell rather than pay £15,000-£20,000 to agents.

France is inextricably linked with romance, conjuring up images of wine, leisurely gastronomic pursuits and rolling countryside. Peter Mayle has a lot to answer for. Flicking through properties on the Internet inspired a few idle daydreams. Perhaps I could scrape together the cash, buy a charming ferme, live on snails and earn me crouze?

The fantasy was cruelly shattered by Liz Oliver, managing director of Francophiles. "You get the real dreamers at the lower end of the market. Don't expect to find a house for under £20,000 that you can move straight into," warns Liz. "You might find somewhere in the middle of nowhere but it will be terribly, terribly rural and do you really want live in the middle of nowhere?"

Headmaster David Newton is not a dreamer. Together he and Swiss wife Ursi bought their house through Francophiles after firstly undertaking rigorous homework. "We thought about it for years and came to the conclusion that we either did it or never mentioned it again," says David. After eliminating various areas, the north because of its weather and the south because of its distance, they spent a week viewing sixteen properties which they narrowed down to three.

The Newtons finally bought a renovated, Charentaise farmhouse for £57,000. The area is popular with tourists and they rent out the nineteenth-century house producing a 20% return on their investment. This is not always the case. "For rental properties a pool is essential. Our phone rings non-stop but friends without a pool have struggled," says David who went on to buy the barn next door for £7,500. Having spent £40,000 on restoration, they are about to spend their first holiday there and are con-

sidering a third property in an area they love for its charmingly hospitable people. "I asked if they rent us British buying up their houses and they said they were pleased as otherwise they would live in ruins. Apparently we're preferable to Germans and Parisians," laughs David.

All buyers I spoke to had complimentary stories about French builders with some going beyond the call of duty. Peter Haynes is 70 and feels it's time to sell his Normandy house but he has fond memories of French craftsmen. The local mayor of the next town organised builders for Peter who specified a traditional restoration: "I assumed they would use soft wood but was surprised to find oak doors and window frames."

Dick Schrader, publisher of French Property News, sees a stark difference between today's climate and the Eighties: "Money was burning holes in pockets and there was a lot of froth on the market." Many buyers undoubtedly came unstuck when they bought beautiful properties needing refurbishment but with a naive view of the potential cost.

Builder Bob Thompson bought a shell of a house in the Loire nine years ago but has never spent a night in his French home: "I was kidding myself that I'd do the work but now I realise I'm never going to have the time or the money," says Bob under the disapproving eye of wife Liz.

Today there's a proliferation of information in the form of books, exhibitions and websites. Many British agents have strong links and expertise in the French property market so there are no excuses. Dick Schrader says it comes down to one word: "realism". "You hope that people have taken advice, covered the area and concluded that it's right for them."

Do your research and narrow your chosen region to avoid driving huge distances each time you view.

Go through a British agent who is registered in France as it costs no more.

Check exactly what you are buying as there is no standard contract.

Don't pay money to anyone except the notaire, the French lawyer who acts on your transaction.

Homework for home work

Working at home can be a real pain if you aren't sitting comfortably. Rosalind Russell looks at the latest in office furniture

Making the decision to leave the security of an office to go freelance is a heady experience. No more commuting, no office politics. And there's the anticipation of setting against tax the cost of heating and lighting the room you'll use at home as an office, your computer system, the telephone bill and desk. However, the cost of fitting out an office can be an expensive initial outlay.

Deciding on the budget, however, depends on your commitment to home working. It's not much of a hardship to manage with cheap and cheerful if you're only going to use it an hour or two a day.

Sitting on a dining chair for six hours a day, however, would persuade even the thirdest to invest in a properly designed office chair. You can pay anything from £160 for a desk from Debenhams Office range up to £1,755 for the Backsaver Ultimate Office Chair from Back2.

The Backsaver allows for several positions, including a supportive upright position for desk work, semi-reclined for reading or talking on the phone and fully reclined for dreaming up how you're going to get this one past the Inland Revenue. It has an automatically retracting foot rest and adjustable seat height and head rest.

Back2 was launched by Guy Cinnamon, whose first ergonomic furniture products were anatomically correct pillows sold in the shop Anatomia. His new London showroom stocks more than 40 designs of office chair.

"Many people just don't know how to sit properly," says Cinnamon, "which is a sure way of getting back pain. Even if you don't suffer from discomfort yet,

prevention is infinitely preferable to cure."

The latest in the Back2 range is the Hag Saddle Chair, which may look strangely familiar to horse riders and just strange to anyone else. But it has been carefully designed to allow the hips to stretch and relax while the knees rest below the hips, with the feet flat on the floor - just as you would sit in a saddle in fact and quite easy to get used to, as it's not attached to an unpredictable animal that can bolt at the sight of an old paper bag.

The Hag Saddle has an unusually shaped adjustable back rest and can be rocked into a reclining position. Relaxing back, the elbows can be rested on the curved sections creating a stretch across the shoulders. It comes in a choice of fabrics, including a jazzy black-and-white zebra design, and costs from £551.

If that seems a bit pricey, the chain Office World offers a vast range of office furniture to suit most home workers. They will advise on the best range for you, depending on the amount of time you'll be spending at your desk.

For a couple of hours a day, the high-back operator's chair at £69.99 would probably be suitable; but for four hours or more, an executive operator's chair at £199.99 would offer more support. It is fully synchronised with a gas lift, and the back can be free floating or in a fixed position. Filing cabinets start at £99.99 for the basic economy to £129 for a model that gives 100 per cent extension. For coloured cabinets, in blue, red or brown and cream, the cost is £140.

"If someone is sitting at their desk full time," says Office



World's Peter Mason, "we might recommend an American manufacturer's range called O'Sullivan. It is made specifically for the home office market. A multi-media cart with room for CD storage, printer, tower unit, pullout keyboard and slanted copy shelf costs £99.99. The next system up, with filing drawers costs £199.99."

A stylish French range from Gautier, also stocked by Office World, includes a folding-door computer unit at £199.99. But the one that might appeal to anyone who finds self-assembly as easy-peasy as advanced engineering would be the Liverpool-based Dams system. Office World's price includes delivery and assembly. The system has adjustable feet height to allow for uneven floors and can be delivered and set up in 10 days. There is free delivery on all other orders over £35 and you can order from the catalogue.

The Hag Saddle Chair from Back2, which allows you to sit just as you would in a saddle

Debenhams 0171-408 4444; Back2 0800 374 604; Office World 0800 5000 24.

THREE TO VIEW: WORKING FROM HOME

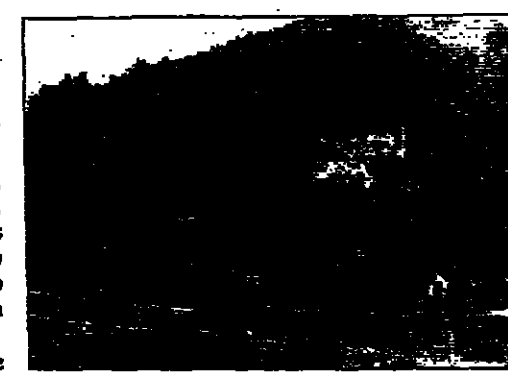
Brasidale, a large detached house at Baldridge, on the Isle of Man, has an 11ft by 8ft study, making it possible to keep all the office clutter away from the rest of the four-bedroom house. Recently refurbished, with a new kitchen and bathrooms, the white-painted house stands in secluded gardens with views across Laxey Bay and the hills beyond. It has a large entrance hall and reception room with open fireplace and folding doors leading to the dining room. Two of the bedrooms are en suite and there is an integral 22ft garage. £335,000 through Christies (01624 623480).



Number 3, Coastguard Cottages, at Toot Rock, East Sussex, is a mid-terrace former coastguard's cottage with wide views across coast and countryside. They could, admittedly, be distracting for anyone toiling away in the first-floor study, which has polished pine floors and twin sash windows. Halfway between Rye and Hastings, the village has a local pub and sailing club as further excuses not to work. With hand-built kitchen, two bedrooms and 22ft sitting room, it's for sale through Phillips & Stubbs for £125,000. A further £10,000 will buy a detached workshop/studio. (01797 227338).



Yew Tree Cottage high in the Staid Valley in Gloucestershire is a three-storey house with open fireplaces, exposed beams, latched doors and wood strip floors. It also has a study with exposed Cotswold stone wall, bookshelves and a door to the garden. Well known through the writings of Laurie Lee in *Cider With Rosie*, the area is three miles from Stroud, with an Inter-City service to Paddington that takes an hour and a half. The cottage has five bedrooms, two bathrooms and a terraced garden with vine-shaded pergola, roses, jasmine and honeysuckle. £245,000 through Hamptons (01452 812254).



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